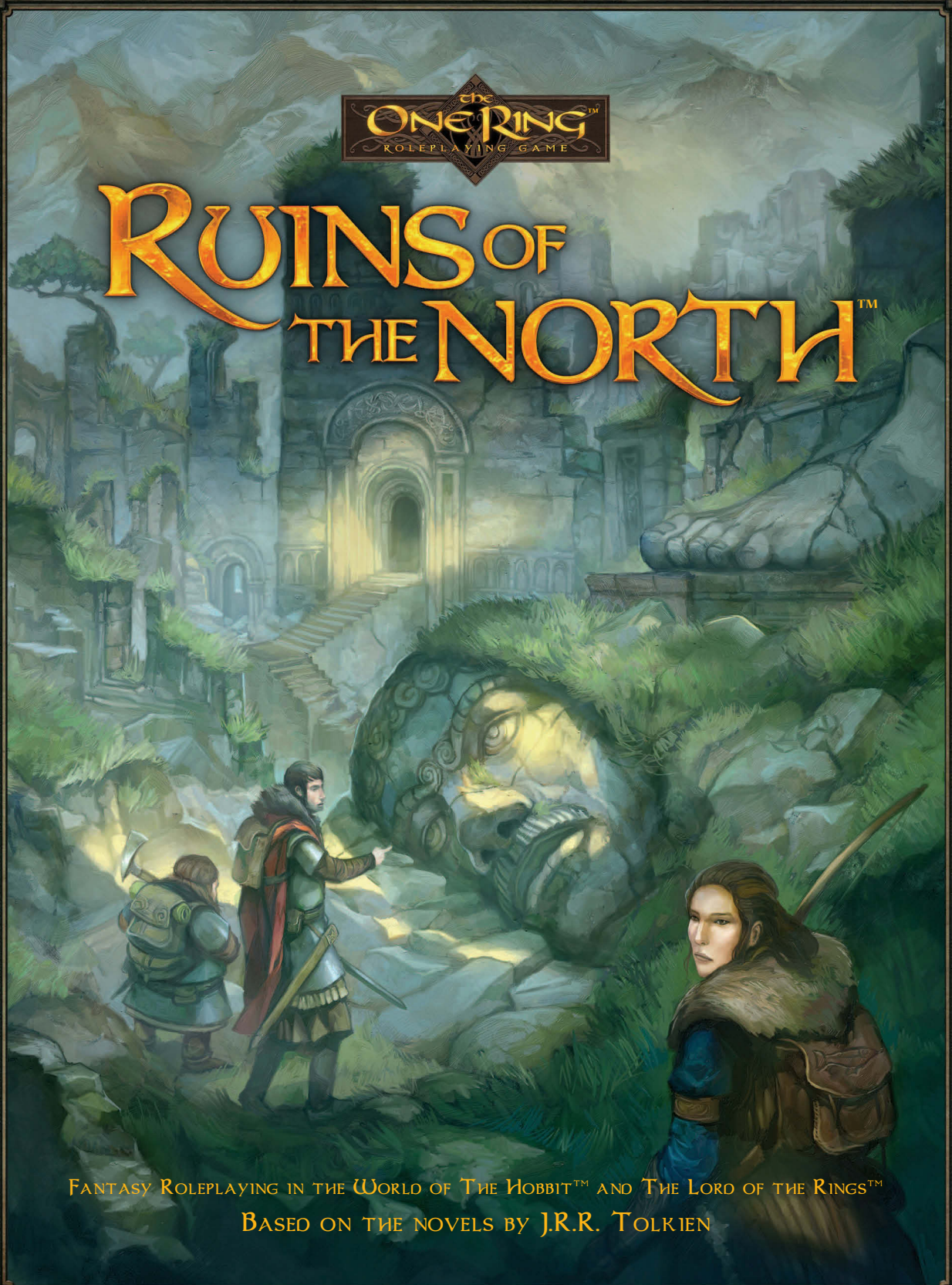
The One Ring™
Roleplaying Game
Ruins of the North™
Fantasy Roleplaying in the World of The Hobbit™ and The Lord of the Rings™
Based on the novels by J.R.R. Tolkien

- Credits -

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- Introduction -

This guide contains six ready-to-play adventures for your company of heroes, complete scenarios that can be played separately, or as a linked series of adventures spanning across a number of years. All adventures are notionally set in the years after 2954, and take place in eastern Eriador, but none are strongly tied to a date so you can move them earlier or later, depending on the needs of your campaign. These adventures all draw on the setting information contained in *Rivendell*, and that supplement will provide a useful companion to this anthology.

The first adventure takes the companions from the foothills of Gundabad across the Misty Mountains to the former capital city of Angmar and finally to Rivendell itself. The following five adventures are all based out of Rivendell and are set in the various lands surrounding the Vale of Imladris. The adventures are presented in order of increasing difficulty: while the first five adventures can be tackled by a group of relatively inexperienced adventurers, the final adventure offers a much greater challenge.

None are recommended for completely novice heroes – it is recommend that a group have played through at least a few adventures first, such as those from *Tales from Wilderland* or even *The Darkening of Mirkwood*.

The six adventures are:

Nightmares of Angmar

A company of heroes embark on a desperate mission to recover the stolen children of the Black Hills from the Goblins who took them. They must find safe passage through snow and peril into the mountains of Angmar and the ruined city of Carn Dûm. As the enemy there seeks to poison their minds against one another, they must flee in the company of Glorfindel to seek sanctuary in Rivendell.

Harder than Stone

A fearsome servant of Sauron has arrived in Eriador to rally the Trolls to the service of his dark master. The heroes set out to find out more about this 'Ogre Captain' and discover both a sinister plot and an unlikely ally, a spirit bound to the will of Sauron but who would dearly like to escape.

Concerning Archers

Bilbo Baggins, at Rivendell researching his book in the company of Glorfindel and Lindir, asks the heroes to

search the ruins of the north to prove that there really was a regiment of Hobbit archers that marched to fight in the Battle of Fornost. To do so they must search a forgotten battlefield and enter a long-abandoned ruin, all the while contending with spirits, Orcs and the ghosts of the past.

The Company of the Wain

The heroes cross paths with an itinerant group of tinkers and traders, selling their wares to the scattered folk of Eriador. But the traders are not what they seem – their leader is an agent of the White Hand, gathering information for Saruman.

What Lies Beneath

The company join a Ranger, Hiraval, on his quest to reclaim his ancestral home in the ruins of Arthedain, crossing paths with a group of bandits who might not be all they appear at first. But an ancient ancestor still resides within the holding, a Spectre who seeks to corrupt Hiraval's bloodline forever.

Shadows Over Tyrn Gorthad

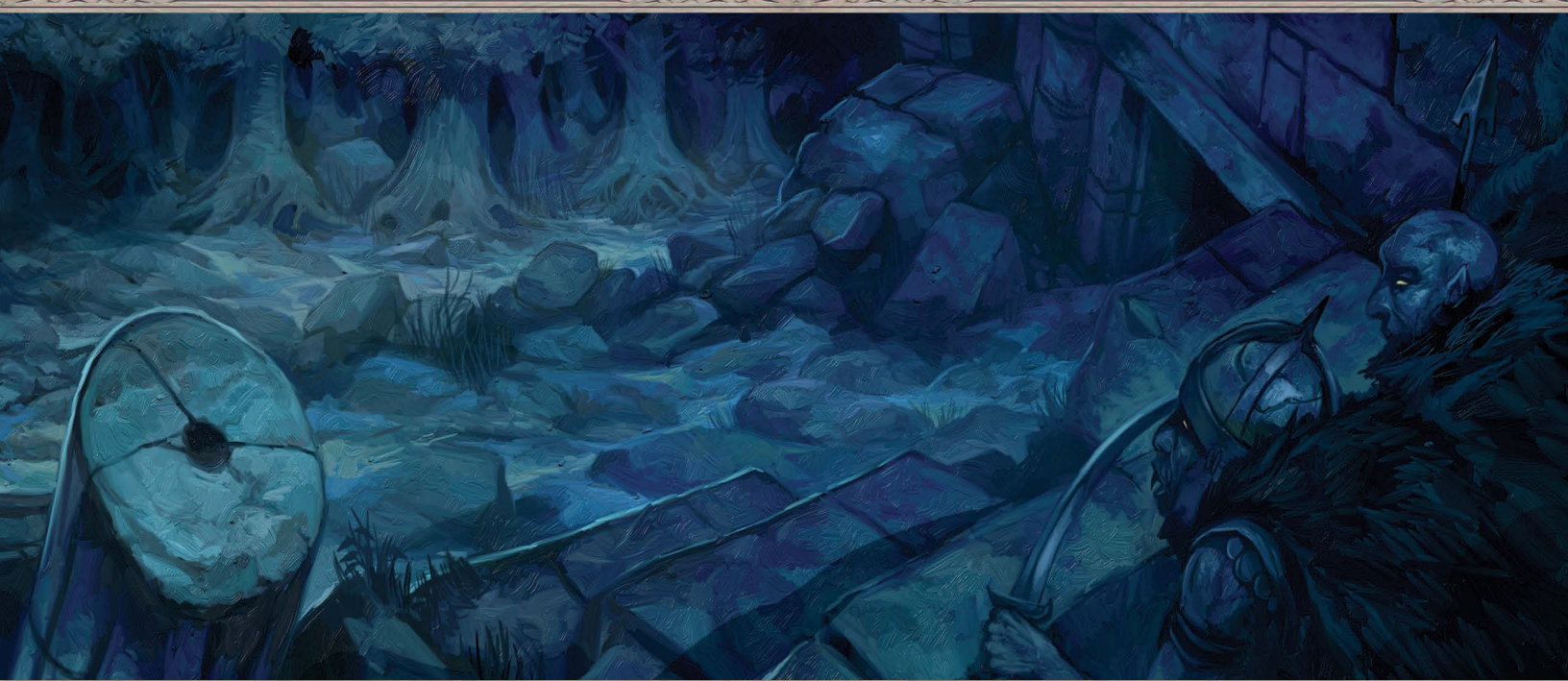
The Barrow-wights are slipping beyond the edge of the Barrow-downs for the first time in centuries and the heroes must help Gandalf the Grey restore them to their tombs.

The Return of the Witch-king

While the adventures found in Ruins of the North are all standalone, they do form a thematic story arc in their own way: that of the rise of the Shadow and the return of the Witch-king to Angmar in readiness for the War of the Ring.

As the players play each adventure, they should find themselves more and more troubled by this growing threat, fearful of the future and what is to come. Unlike in other campaigns, there is no chance of a denouement or a climax where the bad guy is bested; such a victory over the Shadow remains a distant, impossible dream that most will not live long enough to see.

You may think this premise gloom-laden and dour, and you would be right to do so; but have heart that the actions of heroes can still have an impact, and mayhap their victories combined will afford their people respite against the Shadow.



How to Use This Guide

All of the adventures presented in this guide are self contained, and can be played as single quests without reference to any past or future adventure. You can pick the most appropriate adventures to run based on the composition of your players' company and their journeys across Eriador. While the adventures have no direct links to the other adventures, save for mounting evidence of the return of the Shadow to the North, you can combine all six adventures into a campaign. The adventures should be played in the order they are presented in this guide.

Target Numbers

As detailed in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, the default Target Number for all actions is 14. This convention is followed in the adventures in this supplement; therefore if a Target Number is not specified for an action, it can be considered to be 14.

The Passing of Years

If you want to follow the default pacing of gameplay suggested in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, playing all the adventures contained in *Ruins of the North* should take several years. Every scenario offers plenty of opportunities to keep the companions busy for a year of game time, as the players can easily follow their Adventuring phase with a fruitful Fellowship phase, or even start a supplemental Adventuring phase building upon the consequences of the previous one. (Some suggestions concerning the follow-up to each adventure are presented at the end of the scenario).

Even if you don't feel comfortable with playing one adventure per year of game time, we suggest that you at least let one year pass for every two adventures. A tight pace of gameplay could be as follows:

Nightmares of Angmar could be run as the last adventure of 2973, starting in Wilderland and ending with the heroes spending a Year's End Fellowship phase at Rivendell. **Harder than Stone** is suited as the first adventure of the following year, starting in spring as the company meets up once again. **Concerning Archers** could then be played as the second adventure of that year, starting in the summer.

The events of **The Company of the Wain** could, if the Loremaster wishes it, be spread across several years, woven in between any of the previous adventures as required.

What Lies Beneath is best started in spring or summer of 2975, so would suit being played as the first adventure of the following year. **Shadows Over Tyrn Gorthad** might then begin later in that summer, but this adventure is intended to take multiple Adventuring phases across several years to complete.

nightmares of - angmar -

- **When:** The company may undertake this quest during the autumn of any year between 2954 and 2977.

- **Where:** The adventure begins in the Black Hills in the Vales of Gundabad, goes to the Mountains of Angmar and the ruined fortress of Carn Dûm, and may end in Rivendell among the Elves.

- **What:** Goblins raid the dens of a Hill-men tribe and kidnap their children, kill some of their wives, and escape into the North. The player-heroes begin having nightmares of a desolate fortress where the children are being held captive. They embark on a quest to rescue them and must persuade the Hill-men to forsake their dark past and join the Free Folk of the North against the Shadow.

- **Why:** The Lord of the Nazgûl is luring the Hill-men of Gundabad back to the ruins of Carn Dûm to re-establish it as a stronghold of sorcery. If the player-heroes can save their children and make allies of the Hill-men, they will save the Hill-men from going down such a terrible path of evil and thwart the plans of the Enemy.

- **Who:** The company is joined by Hwalda, Essylt, and Fráech—three Hill-men whose fate hangs in the balance.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into six parts, comprising the opening contest with the Hill-men, the gathering of the company, the journey over the Misty Mountains into Angmar, the hunt in the ruins of Carn Dûm, and the final flight to Rivendell.

For details concerning several locations and characters featured in this adventure (including the Hill-men of Gundabad, Werewolf Hollow, Hwalda the Guide, and so on) see the description for the Vales of Gundabad, in *The Heart of the Wild*, starting from page 13.

Part One - Black Helms

In the Black Hills of Gundabad, the player-heroes encounter a tribe of Hill-men. The companions compete in a ritual fight to prove themselves and achieve trust with the savages, but their celebration is interrupted by a thick grey cloak of mist that quickly settles over the land.

Part Two - Orc-work

When screams are heard through the fog, it is soon discovered that Goblins have raided the dens of the Hill-men, killing their wives and kidnapping their children. Pursuit is cut off by a pack of vicious Wargs. The player-heroes begin to have nightmares of ancient ruins filled with evil creatures.

Part Three - Concerning Hill-women

The companions join a young orphaned woman named Essylt on a quest to recover the stolen children, which include her younger siblings. She is protected by Fráech: a fierce warrior from her uncle's tribe. But how will they navigate the frozen mountains of the North? They must locate Hwalda, an experienced guide with no love for Goblins or Wolves, and persuade her to lead them.

Part Four - Mountains and Monsters

The companions dare to journey across the Misty Mountains and into Angmar, in the face of patrolling Goblins and a terrible threat from the ancient past.

Part Five - Carn Dûm

When at last the company reaches the ruins haunting their dreams, they must search their underground halls and tunnels to find the children.

Part Six - An Unexpected Foe

An evil servant of the Shadow tries to seduce Essylt to join him in rebuilding the kingdom of Angmar. The fate of the Hill-men and their children is finally determined.

Epilogue - To Rivendell

Thanks to their heroic deeds, the companions are granted access to Rivendell, the sanctuary guarded by Master Elrond.

Key Moments

During parts of the adventure, Key Moments will be identified that will determine the fate of Essylt in the end. If the companions take certain actions, they will influence her positively; if they do not take those actions, they will influence her negatively. The Loremaster should keep track of the outcomes of these scenes, for they will determine the difficulty of persuading Essylt to turn against the Witch-king. Her decision in this matter will change the history of her people.

While the Loremaster is aware of these Key Moments, the player-heroes should be unaware of them and how important they will be to the conclusion of the quest.

If it seems appropriate, additional Key Moments can be created on the spot. It does not matter how many of these scenes are factored into the final difficulty.

Companies from Wilderland

As this adventure begins in Wilderland, it is the perfect way to bring an existing company from Wilderland over the Misty Mountains and into Eriador. While a company might then desire to return to Wilderland once the adventure is over, they might fall under the enchantment of Rivendell instead, and find themselves eager to explore this new land further.

Companies from Eriador

It may be the case that the players' company is already based in Eriador. If this is the case, the Hill-men of Gundabad may be replaced by Hill-men of Rhudaur, and have the adventure begin in Rhudaur instead. Part Four will most likely be cut out entirely, but the trek along the Frozen Path may be enlarged instead by adding in any of the material presented in *Rivendell* or of your own devising.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in *Rivendell*, any revelation episodes occurring during this adventure are likely to revolve around the sudden treachery of allies, in particular Hill-men of Gundabad that the company encounters, or an increase in the threat posed by the Goblins of Carn Dûm.

- Part One -
Black Helms

It is a gloomy day when the company steps foot in the Black Hills. A cold mist is gradually descending from Mount Gundabad to the North, spreading forth like probing, ghostly fingers across the ground.

There are several reasons why the player-heroes may have travelled to this area, when most days they would likely have avoided the dangerous Vales of Gundabad:

- They are searching for wild horses, offspring of the steeds of the Éothéod.
- They are hunting Wargs or Goblins, or searching for the legendary Werewolf Hollow.
- They were sent by a patron, such as Beorn or Radagast, to muster allies to stand against the wicked things being drawn to Dol Guldur in recent years.
- They have come to explore any of the notable places in the Vales of Gundabad or to search for the Lost Watchtower (see *The Heart of the Wild*, pages 17-19) and they want to consult the Hill-men for lore or even to hire a guide.

Whatever their purpose, upon entering the lightly wooded hills, they pass a barren patch of ground in the shape of an imperfect circle. The rock and dirt are a smoky grey, as if an intense fire had burned there in ages past.

The player-heroes may wish to stop and inspect the circle. If they do, a successful **Lore** roll tells them that this might be a funeral site from long ago, used when the Éothéod cleansed the Vales of the Men of Angmar.

Memorial Circles

They say the Black Hills are haunted by ghosts, inhabited by wild men, and crawling with wolves. Northmen are encountered rarely here, as they shun the Black Hills out of fear that a cruel vengeance will be enacted upon them for the actions of their ancestors – centuries ago, the Éothéod had been relentless in their fight against all servitors of Angmar, seeing them only as wicked workers of sorcery and friends of Goblins and Wargs.

Today, circles of barren ground pepper the hills where the Éothéod piled and burned the bodies of their enemies. No grass or flower ever grows on these dead spots, and their emptiness remind the Hill-men of their sorrow-filled past and the divide that exists between them and the Northmen. Yet, among the Hill-men tribes, there are some who speak of a day when the circles will bloom again. That will be when the strength of their people will be restored, when they will rise from the ashes. Tribesmen holding to such beliefs visit a memorial circle before they engage in important endeavours, like going on a raid, or hunting.

Discovered in the Hills

A pair of Savage Wolfdogs comes bounding over a high wall of earth in the distance, greeting the company with barks and snarls. They are large beasts with a wolf-like appearance. They do not attack, but turn and head in the direction whence they came.

At this point, the companions must decide what to do.

1. The companions may ascend the hill and follow the Wolfdogs;
2. They may take up defensive positions among the trees and rocks in preparation for a possible encounter;
3. They may dash in the opposite direction to escape a possible confrontation.

A companion acting as the Look-out of the company and succeeding in an **Awareness** roll may have noticed the Wolfdogs in time to attempt a single ranged attack before the Wolfdogs disappear. The shot will be moderately hindered (TN 14) due to the medium range and sparse woods.

The Wolfdogs belong to a group of Hill-men who were approaching the memorial circle from the other side of the mound. Their barking alerts the warriors who quickly draw their weapons and prepare themselves for any aggressive action that might be coming; they cannot be ambushed.

- If their pets were shot at, the Hill-men become enraged and charge over the hill with great howls in the tongues of Wargs to attack the player-heroes.

- If they stayed their bows, the Hill-men warriors will wait for the companions to approach, or after a few minutes they will quietly climb the hill themselves in search of the source of the disturbance.

The companions may try to stop them and engage them socially before things turn deadly. If combat erupts, the statistics for Hill-men warriors can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, page 115. There are 12 warriors (plus a maid, see **Among the Hill-men** on the following page), but of varying health and ability, accompanied by six Savage Wolfdogs. However, as soon as one Wolfdog or Hill-man is killed, Cynbal, their Chieftain, orders his men to stop fighting. Enough bloodshed and tragedy has occurred in these hills and they cannot afford more losses now. (If one of the Hill-men dies, it will be either Heilyn, Sul or Uthecar.

Savage Wolfdogs

The dogs of the Hill-men of Gundabad have been bred with Wild Wolves to increase their ferocity. Fully grown, they are tenacious beasts, easily pitted against predators twice their size. Sometimes, their savage nature is difficult to deal with, as they may easily harm a child if unwittingly provoked.

Savage Wolfdogs:

Attribute Level	
2	
Endurance	Hate
10	2
Parry	Armour
5	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 1
Movement, 2	Custom, 0
Perception, 3	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Bite	2
Special Abilities	
Seize Victim	Great Leap

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	4	10	14	Pierce

Among the Hill-men

In all accounts of history and lore, the Hill-men of Gundabad are described as a hateful and wicked folk (see also the description for Angmar in *Rivendell*, on page 48). Their forefathers served the Witch-king in Angmar, performing many vile and murderous acts, and were almost annihilated when the Morgul-lord was defeated by an alliance of Elves and Men. The warriors encountered by the companions belong to a tribe descending from those Hill-men who escaped the wrath of their enemies by hiding east of the Misty Mountains, in the Vales of Gundabad. They dwell in a nearby cluster of primitive shelters, more dens than houses, and are a malnourished, easily angered lot. The more unfortunate among them are stunted or otherwise deformed, the result of decades of inbreeding.

Here follow the description of the group of Hill-men encountered by the companions. With the exception of Essylt (a girl) and Forgall (an old man), they are the best warriors of the tribe (their wives and children remained at home). If the player-heroes can somehow make allies out of the Hill-men, they can turn the tide of hundreds of years of history and redeem them from their ill-favoured past...

Cynbal the Chief: The leader of the pack. Cynbal is rugged and weather-worn, yet pallid from living in the darkness under the hills. His brother Heddwyn the Seer and most of his tribe were lost in a tragic cave-in last year, leaving Cynbal in charge of raising his nieces and nephews and providing for their grieving mother. As of late, his patience is waning; too many nights dealing with children and not enough time in spirit-Warg form. He talks in a low, jarring voice while pointing two scabrous fingers at anyone he addresses. Cynbal's main concern is always the preservation of his kin.

Fráech: The second-in-command. Fráech is a warrior of great strength and skill with a spear. He brazenly shows awful scars on his left arm: the evidence of a bear attack. He is not well-spoken and is unable to write, but if he is caught in a good mood, he may recount the tale of the night he killed the beast by ripping its muzzle apart and stabbing it through the heart. He will recall the great feast that lasted many days afterwards. To end his story, he will bare his teeth in a wicked grin while stroking the fur cape wrapped around his torso and jabbing his spear into the air.

Fráech has never married, but he is quietly interested in the Chief's eldest niece: the fairest Hill-maiden he has ever seen.

Bedwyr: Protector and personal bodyguard of the Chief. He is never caught without his spear and a thick wooden shield displaying the carved image of a Savage Wolfdog's head: the chosen symbol of the tribe. He wears a black iron cap matching his equally dark eyes, while his beard is full and untamed, covering the birth deformity of his jaw. Bedwyr is a fiercely loyal cousin to Cynbal and is easily driven to rage when he perceives that the chief's life is threatened. That is why he is the preferred choice to take the Chief's niece as a wife.

Heilyn, Sul and Uthecar: Three scraggy men carrying shields and blades. These are the Chief's younger brothers serving as the tribes' scouts and look-outs. They are agile and keen-eyed and are able to command their dogs

well. They are similar in appearance and age, yet easily distinguished by their embellishments: one wears an armband of teeth, another a bright green tunic, and the other a large helm masking his countenance.

Daga and Nantha are the names of their Savage Wolfdogs – male and female. Nantha recently had a litter of pups who are resting safely at home in the dens.

Gwal: Small and simple, Gwal is Cynbal's disfigured son, born of his youngest sister who died of blood-loss in childbirth. He was a child of pity and disconsolation, for no one else would give her offspring. His one eye droops while the other one raises; one ear is deaf while the other never formed; one hand has six fingers while the other has two. As for his legs and feet, they work better than those of others. Therefore, Cynbal uses Gwal as an errand-rider, to run hotfoot to the dens and warn the wives of looming hazards.

Durthacht and Madacht: Twin sons of the Chief. These burly men carry extra-long iron spears, self-made using a crucible, moulds and hammers as taught to them by their uncle. In fact, they wear many pieces of iron jewellery such as rings, bracelets, and clasps. Even their helms are shod with layered plates, sections, and ornaments, making them the most elaborately designed of the tribal headgear. Their beards are forked and plaited for convenience when they eat or speak. Durthacht is missing fingers while Madacht is blind in one eye.

Forgall: Cynbal's venerable father. In his lifetime, Forgall has witnessed the diminishing of his folk. Many have died of disease, weak bones, flooding, and in squabbles with their enemies. He believes all of this has been brought on because they have parleyed with River-folk traders, Beornings, Woodmen and other Men of the Anduin Vales who have dared travel as far north as the Black Hills. "Werewolves and Goblins make better friends," he always says, his eyes red and feral.

March: Sprouting son of Madacht. Only recently has March joined the men on their outings. He is half the size of his father, but wears a heavy iron helm and carries a broad sword. He is eager to kill his first large mountain goat for its horns; but if he could slaughter a bear? Why, then he would be as famous as Fráech among the tribes and his father would be very proud!

Taredd: Crazed and unstable warrior. Of all the tribe members, Taredd is the cruellest, acting more like a wild wolf than a Man. He wears no helm, leaving his unkempt hair to poke in every direction, filled with needles and thistles. His clothes are ragged and stained by the blood

of pine martens, which he loves to kill for sport – with his teeth! Anyone encountering him needs to be wary, for at any moment his mood may shift, and they could find themselves the victim of a savage bite or a razor-sharp fingernail cut to the throat.

Essylt: Soon-to-be wife-prize, niece of Cynbal. Possessing a beauty rare among Hill-women, Essylt has drawn the attention of several suitors. Her uncle wishes to give her away to Bedwyr today, but he will have to win the Black Helms first, proving himself to be superior in strength and cunning. She is not happy with these arrangements because she is not ready for marriage; she would rather jump in a river! (For a Hill-man – that's the worst kind of death). Oh, how she misses her father Heddwyn, the wisest man she's ever known, unlike all these muddled dimwits. She hisses and spits at the thought of a husband!

Speaking with Cynbal

If the company engages the Hill-men peacefully, they speak to their Chief face to face. He orders his warriors to lower their weapons, then pushes his way forward. As usual, all players may make a roll of **Insight** to gain bonus Success dice to employ during the encounter (see Preliminary Rolls on page 151 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*).

Set Tolerance

The initial Tolerance is equal to the highest Valour in the company. Increase the Tolerance by 1 if no aggression has been shown. Reduce the Tolerance by 1 if there are any Elves present; by 2 if the Hill-men have lost a Wolfdog; or by 3 if a member of the tribe was killed.

Introduction

The Chief will respond positively to any presentation given using humble **Courtesy**, but he will automatically reject all attempts to impress him with **Awe**. It is best that one person handles these remarks.

Interaction

The Hill-men want to know what is the company's purpose for coming to the Black Hills. What the companions want from the Hill-men depends on why they were wandering the Black Hills in the first place.

Cynbal is a man of few words, but generally answers to any questions the companions pose him in a respectful manner. Generally, for each piece of information he provides, he requires to be told something about the company in return. If the companions indulge the old chief's curiosity, he may offer lore about the Vales of Gundabad, how to find a guide, or even offer temporary shelter and food in his tribe's dens. After the encounter has been going on for a while, Cynbal tires of the word-duel, and stands up while twirling and swinging his sword in an impressive manner, showing his mastery with the aged weapon. He then points at the spokesman to do something similar.

The Black Helms

Black Helms is a form of ritual fight practised by the Hill-men of Gundabad. It was invented when two rambunctious warriors squabbled over the magnificent helms of two fallen enemies, lords of the Eothéod. Legends say that the warriors each strapped a helm upon their head, and then in a display of bestial savagery, wrestled to remove their opponent's helm until one finally succeeded by breaking the other's neck. During the contest, onlookers hallooed and guffawed while slinging black mud into the eyes of the wrestlers, which ended up splattering and caking their helms too; thus the name Black Helms.

Much of the game remains the same today (without the requirement of breaking a neck) and any number of contestants can compete at once. This mock combat has helped to preserve some of the greater warriors among the tribes. The winner of the contest is simply the last person to keep his headgear on; when it is removed, they are eliminated. Wooden buckets of fresh, slick mud are placed around the arena's perimeter so that spectators can join the action and make a mess of things. Prior to each challenge, rewards for the winner are negotiated, with the Chief getting the last word.

"In these lands, men are judged worthy by their skill with a blade or a spear, or by a display of their strength. Show me!"

To truly impress Cynbal, the player-hero will need to perform a spectacular move with a weapon by making two successful rolls in a row using the Weapon skill of his choice (TN 14). As soon as he fails any roll, Cynbal is unimpressed and he dismisses him. The rest of the Hill-men howl in mockery.

If two successful rolls are made consecutively, Cynbal is satisfied, and invites the hero to participate in a contest of strength he calls "the Black Helms" as the company's champion...

If the Tolerance of the encounter is exceeded, Cynbal offers little help, but allows the companions to redeem themselves by offering one hero the chance to participate in the games.

Wrestling with Hill-men

The companions are led to a small patch of hard ground, nestled in the centre of surrounding hills, where the earth forms a natural arena.

The rules and prizes are quickly reviewed by the Chief: Contestants will be disqualified for using weapons, deliberately harming opponents or if they get outside assistance. The prizes include a roast of cow, a lush fur cape, and Essylt the Fair, the niece of the Chief!

Companions wishing to influence the stated rewards can do so with skills such as **Inspire** or **Persuade**, but treasure is not available even if they get on their knees and beg for it.

Key Moment: Test of Sympathy

If the player-heroes recognise Essylt's unhappiness (proposing a task using Insight, for example) and suggest an alternative prize, they will influence her positively. Otherwise, she will remember their moment of indifference and be influenced negatively.

The fight is handled in a series of rounds in which the contestants try to remove the helms from their opponents. The last man with their helmet on wins.

Bedwyr, Fráech, and Taredd are the competitors for today. Each wears a distinct and dramatic helm. If the company's champion does not have his own helm, he must borrow one, for example using **Persuade**. If he can think of another way to acquire one, that would be fun too!

When the Chief raises his spear, all hell breaks loose amid uncontrolled Warg-cries!

Running the Fight

The mock fight uses the following guidelines:

- At the beginning of every round, the company's champion may make a roll of **Awe** to intimidate or demoralise his opponents. The TN for this test is equal to 10 plus the highest Attribute level among all remaining contenders. A success grants him 1 bonus die to use on his **Athletics** test during the round, a great success grants 2 dice, and an extraordinary success grants 3.

- Companions who are watching the fight may assist their champion by flinging mud on a specific opponent. They do this by making a roll using the **Dagger** skill against TN 16. In order to be effective, however, they must achieve a great or extraordinary success. A great success causes the target to become *moderately hindered* (all rolls TN +2) while an extraordinary success makes him *severely hindered* (all TNs +4). Failing with an means that mud got in their companion's eyes instead, and he becomes *severely hindered*!

- The Loremaster makes a single roll for the entire tribe to sling mud at the company's champion against TN 14. He does this using a Feat die and 2 Success dice. A great success leaves the player-hero *moderately hindered* and an extraordinary success leaves him *severely hindered*. Failing with a means that one random Loremaster character is now *severely hindered* instead.

- During the first round, Fráech charges the company's champion, choosing him out as his opponent. Meanwhile, Bedwyr charges Taredd, puts him in a tight head-lock, and pops off his helm with a terrible

squeeze! That leaves the companion to face Bedwyr if he beats Fráech.

- If the companion is eliminated first, Fráech will win Black Helms, fuelled by his desire for Essylt.

- Every round, the companion must make an opposed **Athletics** roll against his opponent (both roll against TN 18, appropriately adjusted with all relevant modifiers). A helm is removed by a successful roll only if the opposing roll fails. Wrestlers that achieve a great or extraordinary success are no longer hindered by mud.

Hill-men Wrestlers:

Opponents	Statistics
Bedwyr	Athletics 3, Attribute level 5
Fráech	Athletics 3, Attribute level 4
Taredd	Athletics 2, Attribute level 4

A Celebration Ruined

As soon as the ritual fight is over, a dense fog rolls in, making it impossible to proceed with the planned celebrations in honour of the winner. The loss of visibility and sudden chill strikes fear in the superstitious Hill-men, and the companions find themselves doing all they can to keep from being hustled and trampled underfoot by the escaping tribesmen. Cynbal orders everyone back to the dens and Gwal is already on the move to warn the Hill-women. The Chief addresses the company:

"This fog is the work of sorcery! It is dangerous to stay outside. Please, come and stay the night under the earth with us. We'll eat and finish our ceremonies there."

But before the companions can respond to Cynbal, a distant scream is heard. It is a woman crying out in absolute terror. Her voice is sustained and echoes throughout the hills, increasing to its highest pitch before suddenly being cut off, leaving only the sound of the cold wind.

Old Forgall speaks in a scolding growl to his son.

"That was your woman! You should not have welcomed these outsiders!"

- Part Two - Orc-work

After a short run in the fog, thick smoke suddenly fills everyone's nostrils. Flames can be seen rising from the Hill-men refuges, rough houses of dried mud, wood and piled rocks built around the entrances to their tunnel network under the hills. Gwal stands there coughing and choking and the sound of yelping puppies can be heard in the lick of flames. Daga and Nantha – if they are still alive – race in to find their offspring but never return.

Deathly afraid of the fire, the Hill-men are frantic and bewildered. They can go no further, except Fráech, who reluctantly proceeds, disappearing into the smoke. Essylt is crying and looks to the companions for help.

"Please, please. I am too scared to go! My mother and sisters and brothers are in there. They are all I have."

Key Moment: Test of Sacrifice

If the player-heroes respond to Essylt immediately and head into the flames, they will influence her positively; for she will remember their sacrifice. If they hesitate or stop to talk or plan, they will influence her negatively.

Fire and Anguish

Choosing to rush into the fire is extremely dangerous. Player-heroes will automatically lose 2 points of Endurance in the first round due to smoke and flame, increasing to 3 points the second round, 4 the third round and so on (up to 5 points per round). In addition, they must make a Protection test against TN 16 each round to keep from being Wounded.

Have them make a **Search** test every round to locate survivors. Sadly, during the first few rounds, they discover several Hill-women lying dead on the ground, pierced with arrows, broken blades sticking out of their lifeless bodies, hands tied behind their backs with ropes (companions witnessing this gruesome scene must make a Corruption test or gain 1 Shadow point (see Anguish, on page 222 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*).

A hero succeeding with a great of extraordinary result finds the only survivor: a Hill-woman hiding in a large hole in the ground weeping with deep sobs. She will emerge from the flames on her own if they do not find her, or if they have left the camp already. It is Briga, the wife of Madacht; she is pregnant.

"Goblins! Goblins! They have taken all the children! They went down into the tunnels and disappeared into the dark! Save them, please, save them..."

The fire is too intense to reach the tunnels, however. Anyone who foolishly attempts this will fall unconscious and need to be rescued before they burn in the flames. They must join the tribe on the outskirts of camp and seek another entrance.

Warg Attack

Outside the burning camp, a pack of Wild Wolves arrives to attack the companions: emissaries of an unseen enemy sent to thwart them. Forgall greets his Warg friends in their growling tongue and speaks to a large Wolf-leader, while the rest of the tribe, including Cynbal and Essylt leaves quickly to access other passageways in pursuit of the Goblins.

The companions do not understand the language of the Wild Wolves, but anyone who makes an **Insight** roll understands enough to prepare for an attack, allowing them to check for combat advantages. Those with *Enemy-lore (Wargs)* may invoke the Trait for an automatic success.

The Enemy

There are two Wild Wolves for every companion in addition to a Wolf-leader. Forgall does not fight, but his loyalty is to the Wargs. The player-heroes may wish to address him, but if they kill him, they will each gain 4 points of Shadow for the misdeed and effectively end their relations with the Hill-men (see the box to the right).

Complications

The hills are lightly wooded and the grey fog makes visibility difficult. This causes the player-heroes to be moderately hindered when attacking, meaning all their Target Numbers to hit will be modified by +2. The Wild Wolves are unhindered by the fog and the woods.

Killing Forgall

If the companions kill Forgall, the Loremaster will need to rework some of the adventure as any future encounters with the Hill-men tribe will be futile. He was the eldest of their kin, beloved and well respected. The Hill-men will order the player-heroes to leave the Black Hills upon discovering Forgall's body, or fight them to the death in a rage of fury. If the companions hide the body, they will gain another 2 points of Shadow each for their treachery and it will be found before morning.

The tribe will ambush the company at first light, but not before one of them is awakened by a nightmare (see *The Nightmares Begin* on page 16). If the companions escape or kill the entire tribe in the fight, Essylt and Briga will be the only survivors. Briga will leave to find another tribe, but Essylt will plead with the companions to help her find her siblings. It will be the last hope the heroes have for reconciling with the Hill-men of Gundabad.

Fight Events

The following battle events may be considered by the Loremaster and incorporated at appropriate moments.

Forgall's Hatred

The elderly Hill-man surges with primal energy, circling the fight and baring his teeth, saying: *"Die! All of you; for you should never have come here."*

- This counts as using his *Strike Fear* special ability. All companions must make a Fear Test or lose their ability to spend Hope points for the remainder of the fight.

Freezing Fog

The temperature falls rapidly, filling the air with small ice crystals similar to a light snow, and hard rime begins forming on surfaces here and there, adding to the already terrible conditions.

- The companions become *severely hindered*, modifying their TN to hit by +4.

Cowardly Retreat
If the Wild Wolves are losing, Forgall slinks away to avoid being left alone with the player-heroes in the aftermath. The Wargs will fight to the death.

After the Fight

Before the companions can address their wounds, a regiment of grey crows scatter suddenly from the pines, heading northward. The snow and fog obscure them slightly from view, but amidst their crowing a few words can be heard distinctly: *"Return to Angmar! Carn Dûm! Carn Dûm!"* they say, over and over as they fly away.

Soon after, Cynbal and the tribesmen return to address the company, taking notice of the dead wolves lying slumped on the ground. They are distraught, soaked and troubled. One of them – possibly Bedwyr – steps forward to speak:

"You have brought ill upon us! We should kill you now, as you have killed these wolves. Our anger grows hot, for we are vexed. The Goblins were our friends, yet this is their work? We cannot enter the tunnels: they are filled with smoke. Why have they turned on us? Why have they taken our kin, slain our women, and burned our homes? Where have they gone? They will pay for this! We will hunt them down, rip apart their stinking flesh, and eat them for dinner."

Let the companions talk with the tribesmen to sort out these disconcerting events using **Inspire**, **Persuade**, **Courtesy**, or other appropriate skills. Forgall tries to rally the tribe against the company, while March – his great grandson – seems to be smitten with the adventurers, especially anyone carrying a sword. No major decisions will be made yet concerning a rescue. In the morning, they will gather other chieftains and warriors for a special tribal council to decide the best course of action. Essylt, overcome with grief, only cries and never utters a word.

If the companions mention the message of the crows, Cynbal recognises Angmar and Carn Dûm as places connected to the history of his folk, but fails to remember the sorcery and wickedness of the Lord of the Nazgûl. In his imagination, Carn Dûm was a magnificent city, destroyed by the cruel Men of the West and the ferocious Elves. Why their children should be taken to Angmar now, he does not know.

The Nightmares Begin

By the time the conversation ends, the fog has lifted, and night has fallen. If the company has been able to uphold good relations with the Hill-men, Cynbal offers them shelter in a hidden burrow outside the camp. It is a crude hideout of sorts, used only by husbands temporarily banned from home (they do not see where the Hill-men go to sleep).

That evening, some of the warriors prowl the land in spirit-Warg form in search of their children, but they find nothing. Wherever the companions end up, they toss and turn, unable to get a good night's rest. They do not recover Endurance.

Before the break of dawn, the companion with the highest Shadow points score awakens from a nightmare, drenched in sweat, and startles the rest of the group with a loud gasp. In case of a tie, or if no companion has any Shadow points, then the dreamer is the hero with the lowest Hope score.

The following should be read aloud or given to the dreaming hero in advance so he can relay the nightmare to the rest of the company:

There is a long wide bridge covered in snow before you. It spans across a deep gorge. Across the chasm, the remnants of great towers lie in ruins and shrouded in ice. You can hear the sounds of children crying from somewhere beneath it, in the bowels of the mountain. But when you begin to cross over, a piercing wail fills the freezing air, as something high above you blots out the light of the dying sun...

The dreamer must pass a Corruption test (TN 16) or gain 1 Shadow point.

Secrets of a Resurrecting Kingdom

The children have been kidnapped and are being taken to Carn Dûm, the stronghold that once was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Angmar. There, they will grow as servants of the new Shadow that is gathering in the depths of the fortress, trained in poison-making and metalworking side-by-side with Orcs and Goblins. Their capture has been ordered by a new minion of Angmar, a Hill-man of Gundabad restored to his sorcerous roots: Heddwyn, father of Essylt and brother to Cynbal!

Heddwyn the Seer was a man foresighted, and could travel the farthest as a spirit-wolf. The night before a tragic cave-in buried him and a large part of his tribe, he had dreamt that he would die soon, and be reborn as a greater man. He ignored that the fateful accident was part of a larger plan orchestrated by the Enemy, for most of the victims were not killed as everyone supposed. Rather, the buried tribesmen were rescued by Goblins and then taken in chains through long, dark tunnels and pathways under the mountains all the way to Angmar. The Hill-men never attempted to recover the bodies of their kin — to dig them out would have cost more lives — so they believed them all dead.

Heddwyn reached the ruins of Carn Dûm in the grip of a burning fever. Left for dead in a deep dungeon, he was visited by the Lord of the Nazgûl himself, recently arrived in Angmar in his guise as the Wraith-lord (*see Rivendell*, page 82). Sensing an unusual power in the derelict form of the Hill-man seer, the Lord of Morgul saved Heddwyn's life with his dark arts, at the same time awakening in his soul the memories of the sorcery of his ancestors.

When he finally recovered from his illness, Heddwyn felt reborn into a new stature, and destined to a higher, albeit darker, fate. He started to believe that only by obeying the will of the Witch-king could his people rise again to their former strength. If they entered his service they would no longer need to hide in the Black Hills, suffering at the hands of the hated Northmen.

Months have now passed since the rebirth of he who was once known as Heddwyn, of the tribes of the Black Hills. He is now a dabbler in sorcery and poisons, a spear of terror in the hand of the Lord of the Nazgûl. Placed in a position of power by the Wraith-lord himself, he has commanded the Goblins of Angmar to fire the forges of Carn Dûm once again and create a new arsenal of weapons and armour.

Through the terrible strength of Mountain Trolls and Orcs he has dug a stone vault to protect his sleeping body and those of his fellow Hill-men. Each night, he roams the icy mountains and the wastes in spirit-wolf form, howling words of power in the language of Wargs. He summons all Orcs and Evil Men into service, for he has become the Witch-servant of Angmar!

It is by obeying his orders that the Goblins have come to the Vales of Gundabad to collect the children of the Black Hills, knowing that the vile act would draw his daughter Essylt to him. It is his sorcerous cries that are causing the nightmares of the companions; visions designed to draw them toward their doom.

- Part Three -
Concerning Hill-women

The Hill-women of Gundabad are a reticent but very perceptive bunch, wild-looking and unkempt, for theirs is a toilsome life. Under the leadership of their men they have suffered many trials: the loss of children and husbands, siblings and parents, and the many dangers deriving from living in the Black Hills, surrounded by Wargs, Werewolves, and Goblins. In spite of all this, most Hill-women are content with serving and surviving, enjoying their everyday activities of raising children, tending cows, sheep and goats, making and washing clothes, growing beans, churning butter, and cooking meals. But there are some among them who desire to be able to change all this one day, as the companions will soon discover...

Essylt the Fair

Essylt is a young Hill-woman with a fiery spirit and an eagerness to break free from the constraints of the life of the Hill-men. She was born without deformity, her skin smoother and softer than that of most newborns, her eyes tinted green. She has always been the object of curiosity, gaining wanted and unwanted attention. But her father Heddwyn was always there to protect her — until the day he died. Essylt hasn't stopped grieving for her loss, for her father's death changed everything, but most notably, it left her vulnerable. Last night, that vulnerability was exploited, and now her mother lays dead on the cold, wet ground and her siblings are lost somewhere in a dark, winding tunnel, being led by filthy Goblins into the frozen north. She is alone in the world, but not forever — not if she determines her own fate.

Tribal Council

Early in the morning, the companions discover that a number of chieftains of various Hill-man tribes have gathered for a council, on top of a nearby mound within sight of the now smouldering camp. The bodies of the dead have been covered and gently laid out on slats of wood in preparation for burial. The leaders are deciding their next course of action, but things do not appear to be going well. If the children of Cynbal's tribe are still alive, they now must be farther than any Hill-man of Gundabad dare travel for fear of flood waters and the mountain mists. Tempers flare as they discuss their options. They cannot count on the Beornings for help or any Northmen for that matter. Some entertain the idea of going to speak with Nagrhaw, the Chief of the Wargs of the Black Hills (see *The Heart of the Wild*, page 16): his spies and informants roam far and wide. Another chief reluctantly mentions sending a rescue expedition, but this idea is protested with pleas that they should remain in the Black Hills to preserve their lives, rather than risking exposure to their enemies; the chief withdraws his suggestion quickly.

Company Interjections

Any companion making a successful **Courtesy** roll may join the council to ask questions and proffer solutions.

- If inquiring about their fear of flood waters, a companion need only make a roll of **Riddle** to prompt the following story from one of the chiefs:

"Many years ago, Northmen raided our hunting camps and enslaved twenty of our warriors. They were put in chains and forced to row fishing boats for long hours on the twin rivers of the vales. One day, when the boats were moored on the shore, they saw an opportunity to free themselves and they seized it. They took the Northmen by surprise and secured them with ropes. After eating some fish from the packing barrels, they emptied the rest. Then, they got their revenge: they crammed the prisoners into the containers, filled them with river-water, and sealed them shut and drowned the slavers. As soon as they were finished, a terrible storm arose out of the mountains; floodwaters rushed in and swept them down the river, along with the barrels of dead Northmen. Most of the warriors perished, the water took them, but a few survived to tell the tale. The storm lasted a fortnight, killing many of our hill people and livestock as recompense for their actions. Today, the curse is not fully satisfied, so we avoid the rivers and the mists, trying not to provoke them and remind them of our debt."

- Anyone wishing to convince the Hill-men not to visit Nagrhaw, may use **Persuade** or **Inspire** (TN 16), but if they suggest that the chief of the Wargs is in

league with the kidnapping Goblins by mentioning last night's attack, the TN may be lowered for rousing their suspicions.

- A successful **Insight** roll reveals that nothing will persuade the Hill-men to undertake a rescue mission of their own. They are deeply afraid to leave their families and uncertain about future Orc raids.

It seems that no satisfactory solution will be reached to recover the children.

Key Moment: Test of Courage

If the companions offer themselves to go on a quest for the children without any prompting, Essylt will be positively impacted by their bold courage. If they do not suggest it on their own, without her plea, this moment will result in an overall negative impact due to her disillusionment of them as noble heroes.

Essylt's Resolve

If the company volunteers to lead an expedition to recover the children, Essylt is very thankful and announces that she will go too. Fráech offers to be her bodyguard (go to **Cynbal's Farewell**).

If the companions do not volunteer to lead a rescue expedition, Essylt steps into the centre of the gathering, her sable hair shining and flowing freely upon her shoulders, her eyes hard and resolute as she makes a proposal of her own. She especially looks at her Uncle Cynbal and the companions when she speaks.

"Sit here and argue to no end as you will, brave warriors of the Black Hills and strange visitors too. But here is what I will: I will hinder your safe plans by marching into Angmar myself and reclaiming my brothers and sisters! They are but frightened children in the cruel hands of Goblins. I may now be an orphan maiden, but that is not all. Essylt I am, Heddwyn's daughter. Do not stand between me and my kin. Move aside or join me, for I defy the man who would attempt to stop me."

One of the Hill-men jumps up suddenly and leaps toward her. He threatens her with a snarl.

"Submit yourself, woman, to the wishes of the council."

Still she does not blench. In one swift motion, Fráech steps forward and shoves the man aside.

"Leave her alone. I will go with Essylt – as her protector."

It is time for the companions to respond. Will they join her too? They are not obligated to go on such a dangerous quest, but this is a test of their heroism and their only chance to broker peace between the Hill-men tribes and the Free Folk of the North, and to gain them as allies in the fight against the Dark Lord.

Cynbal's Farewell

Observing that he cannot halt such determination, Cynbal finally concedes and the council disperses amid concerns. He lets out a heavy sigh, and addresses the company.

"How long your journey will be, I do not know. It is autumn now, but the cold freeze of winter is upon us and it will be worse high in the mountains. You will need the warmest clothes, plenty of food, and sharp weapons by your side. I fear for your life Essylt, but there is nothing left for you here. If you must, go and find your brothers and sisters and bring them home again. We will look for

your coming over the hilltops, on a clear, cool morning in spring. And if the grasses and flowers are growing upon the memorial circles, it will be a sign that our dark days have passed."

But We Do Not Know The Way

Neither Essylt nor Fráech have ever travelled outside the Vales of Gundabad, let alone across the Misty Mountains into the West. They do not know the passes or where the dangers are to avoid them. They also haven't the foggiest idea of how to find the fabled citadel of Carn Dûm.

These facts are unnerving considering the severe cold and awful conditions that the company is certain to face. Therefore, sometime during the packing of their fur-lined cloaks, thick warm clothes, boots, dried meats, nuts, frying pans, pots, water-skins, ropes, torches, flint, weapons, helms and other important travelling gear, Essylt makes the suggestion that they go and find a guide, who can keep them alive during the journey. And the only person she can think of is a Hill-woman named Hwalda, a strange figure that her father always referred to as the Angry Mixed-blood. She lives among the tribes on the south-western edge of the Black Hills about a days walk from here. She is seldom home, however, choosing to be an explorer and guide for anyone willing to give her the proper remuneration.

Fortunately for the company, Cynbal and his men saw her a few days ago returning from a trip; she will be easy to find.

Meeting Hwalda

After a day's walk through the hills, the company comes to a new encampment of Hill-men in an alcove of pines. Essylt and Fráech suggest they should approach alone first, to prevent frightening the women and children seen milling about.

If the company takes this advice, everything will proceed as normal; otherwise, they will modify the Tolerance of this encounter by -1. One of the women calls to Hwalda, who emerges from a small hut. She approaches with her hand on the hilt of her sword. The initial Tolerance is set equal to the highest Valour among the company.

Ŧwalda: The Mixed-blood Guide

When she was just a small girl, Ŧwalda's Northman father would take her on hunts beyond the boundaries of the rivers. She learned to be unafraid of others and to befriend those with a kind heart. After her father was slain by Goblins and wolves, she was taken by her mother to live in the Black Ŧills among her relatives, where she still returns after long treks into the wilderness in search of ancient treasure.

Ŧwalda is not a typical Ŧill-woman. She has no husband, nor is she interested in having one. All the trappings of being a mother and taking care of men do not appeal to her. Ŧer spirit is an adventurous one; but among her kin, this is not appreciated. They believe she is putting the tribes at risk every time she ventures beyond the borders, but she takes no heed to their superstitions and fears. After all, they do not share the same friends or enemies; her Warg-hide cloak and Dwarven sword prove this. Unlike most Ŧill-men, she is well-travelled, which makes her an excellent guide for hire. More about Ŧwalda can be found in *Ŧhe Ŧeart of the Wild*, page 15.

Wait! It can't be Ŧwalda!

It is entirely possible that the companions have already encountered Ŧwalda in an earlier adventure and that something might prevent her from being part of this tale (she died, or is away on another assignment). If that is the case, simply create an alternative figure that they can approach, and substitute that person for Ŧwalda throughout the rest of this adventure.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the encounter in the usual way (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 189). The total number of successes will be used to determine Hwalda's fees and contract.

Introduction

The Introduction stage can be handled with **Awe** or **Courtesy** just fine. The player-heroes should present

themselves and the purpose of their coming. Hwalda is fascinated to see those of her kin travelling with a group of adventurers. They may also use **Riddle** to extract information about Hwalda's background. Otherwise, she does not speak of herself.

Interaction

After hearing the company's request, anyone choosing to observe closely can make a roll of **Insight** to notice that something is troubling Hwalda and can inquire about it using **Riddle**. She will reveal that she has been experiencing dreams of a dark fortress in the past and has indeed crossed the Misty Mountains in search of it. If they mention the message of the crows or their own dreams with **Riddle**, they can also make a roll of **Persuade** to convince her that the dreams are related to Carn Dûm and carry some dark significance.

Because the quest is very dangerous, she will need to be convinced using **Awe** or **Persuade** to undertake the task of guiding them. She is particularly concerned about the onset of winter in the mountains. Even with her knowledge of the passes, it will be a difficult journey, and there can be no guarantees of their safety.

As far as the overall motivation to rescue the children is concerned, using **Inspire** will go a long way to evoke a good response from Hwalda to join the cause. It can also be used to speak about how the quest will positively affect relations between the Northmen and the Hill-men tribes.

The encounter may yield the following results (compare the number of successful rolls the companions achieved along the encounter with the entries below):

1: Hwalda is troubled over their chances of survival and asks for a payment of 10 Treasure up front to join the group, to be completed with half of all Treasures found during the expedition. In addition, her contract includes abandonment of the quest as soon as anyone dies or is captured. She will not be responsible for any casualty and she will not divert from the course to Carn Dûm for any reason.

2-4: The company has impressed Hwalda, but not completely. She will require only 5 Treasure to start and four shares of all Treasure found. The contract stipulates that she will abandon the quest if more than one death or capture occurs. She will participate in a rescue attempt only if she deems it possible, but she will not divert from the route to Carn Dûm for any reason.

5-6: What has been shared has gripped Hwalda in some way. She requires 3 Treasure to begin and only three shares of all found. Her contract recognises the danger of such a quest and says that she will only abandon it if at least half the company is killed or captured. She will cooperate in any necessary rescue attempts and she is willing to divert from her planned route only if she feels it is safe enough and will not add too much to the estimated timeframe of the quest.

7 +: Hwalda is completely sold on the purpose and cause of this quest. She likes the companions and therefore only requires two shares of the Treasure found as remuneration for her services. She does not ask for any prior payment, and she commits to the quest wholeheartedly. Deaths and captures are noted as possibilities, but she will not abandon the company. She is willing to assist in all rescues and see the company through to the end. If diversions are called for and it seems profitable, she is willing to extend her duties to accommodate them.

Key Moment: Test of Zeal

If the companions use Inspire successfully when talking about saving the children and making peace between Northmen and Hill-men, they will influence Essylt positively in the end. If they do not, she will remember their dullness and be influenced negatively.

Before Departure

The company is invited to stay as guests of Hwalda in the Hill-men camp. Not much activity takes place, as all the warriors are away on a hunting trip for several days and do not return. This is a good time to get proper rest and healing for any companion in need of it.

Loremaster Characters in the Company

The Loremaster should keep in mind for the rest of the adventure that the companions are not alone. Hazard (and revelation) episodes can be customised to feature Hwalda, Essylt or Fráech, and their presence should be accounted for in any combat encounter. This said, it can be a tricky thing to keep track of their Endurance, combat rolls, and so on. Essylt and Fráech are easily managed, possibly using the statistics for Hill-men warriors on page 115 of *The Heart of the Wild*, while Hwalda is detailed on page 15 of the same manual. The rules for Loremasters characters found on page 217 of *The One Ring* can come in handy, to adjudicate if a Trait or a stat of one of the Hill-men may be considered to favour the companions (for example, Hwalda's is *Wary* and *Suspicious*, and rolls of Insight or Awareness might see their TN lowered if Hwalda is about).

A Second Nightmare

One night, another nightmare visits the company. As before, the dreamer is the companion with the highest Shadow points score. In case of a tie, or if no companion has any Shadow points, then the dreamer is the hero with the lowest Hope score.

Down, down, down, you descend a spiral stair into blackness toward the sounds of crying children. You are careful not to slip or tread too hard, for the steps are damaged and chipped as if some ancient army trampled on them with heavy iron shoes. In your hand is a flickering torch casting unsettling shadows on the stone walls all around. The air is chilled and carries the scent of must, fur, and rotten meat. Your heartbeat grows stronger with each footstep. When you reach a landing, you step onto it, waving your torch from side-to-side to reveal what lies ahead in the darkness: nothing to the right; nothing to the left; nothing before or behind. Yet, a long nasty growl seems to be coming from... above! Without warning, a monstrous wolf jumps down from a shelf, planting itself face-to-face with you. Its eyes are crimson and threatening, its fur is matted and coarse. You draw your weapon with your free hand before it lunges to bite your neck. You intercept the attack, jabbing deep into the creature's mouth; but then it evaporates! For a moment you stand in the torch-light alone... until a low, eerie voice whispers from behind, "Serve him, or die!" And you snap out of your dream.

The dreamer must pass a Corruption test (TN 16) or gain 1 Shadow point.

Sending a Message to a Patron

If the companions think of it, before they depart they might desire to send a message to a patron or to some leader of the Free Folk of the North. If they do, their choice will provide an additional reason for Glorfindel to show up at Carn Dûm in the end, as the patron may pass the message to Rivendell.

- Part Four - Mountains & Monsters

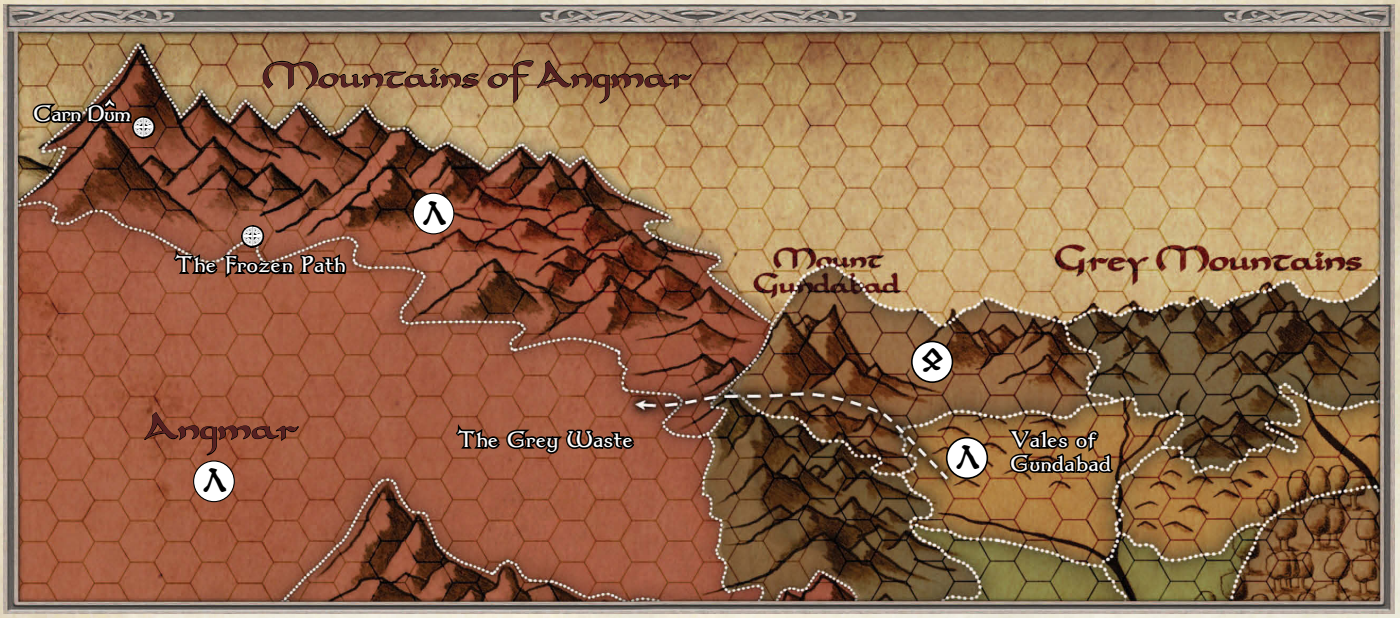
The journey from the Black Hills to Carn Dûm is a dangerous adventure in itself, an endeavour the companion may face only with Hwalda accompanying them. Without the knowledge of the hidden Goblin-roads criss-crossing the foothills of Mount Gundabad leading west, the companions do not have many chances to find the way leading across the Misty Mountains. And even if they get there, only Hwalda (or another experienced guide...) may lead them across the blasted Grey Waste of Gundabad without them losing days on end, searching for a good trail to follow.

The Journey

During the first leg of the journey, the company will travel from the Black Hills north across the Vales of Gundabad, and then cross the Misty Mountains to enter the Grey Waste on the other side. On the second leg of the journey, they will cross the waste to find a road leading into the Mountains of Angmar, and all the way to Carn Dûm.

Preliminary Lore Rolls

The companions are allowed to make **Lore** rolls to check for journey advantages. If Hwalda (or a chosen replacement) is



their guide, the company may listen to her plans, for she has travelled this route before (in spirit-form and physically): all preliminary **Lore** rolls enjoy a free Attribute bonus.

The Gift of a Guide

If Hwalda or another experienced Loremaster's character is guiding the company to Angmar, any Hazard episode associated with the Guide role is considered to be automatically overcome with no negative consequences (therefore, no Hazard suggestions are given for the Guide role, but those in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 161 can be used if needed).

Crossing the Misty Mountains

To traverse the mountain range the company must head north-west for 20 miles, and ascend a tract of upland moor to find the entrance to the Long Valley. It is a steep-sided gap in the Misty Mountains, opening right under the face of Mount Gundabad. The valley climbs roughly from east to west for 60 miles, to finally descend in a south-west direction into the Grey Waste.

- The trek is considered to traverse severe terrain in Dark Lands and it takes the company 12 days to cross it. All companions must pass 3 Fatigue tests (TN 16 with a guide like Hwalda, TN 18 without one).

To approach the mountain range in autumn worsens a traveller's predicament, as strong winds are channelled between the steep rock faces of the valley. If the companions are attempting the crossing of the mountains in the fall of 2954, it will be the worst winter on record (see *The Darkening of Mirkwood*, page 37), and snow and ice will put the company under the continuous threat of freezing (all Fatigue tests receive a TN modifier of +2).The companions have packed enough dried food in their travelling gear for one week, but after that they will need to make **Hunting** rolls to catch rabbits and the like for fresh meat.

Hazard Suggestions

Here follow suggestions to set up one or more specific Hazard episodes (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 160).

Out on a Ledge (Scout – Wound)
The companion is tricked by the thick snow that has fallen during the night, and treads too close to the edge and risks falling onto a lower path of rock. The Scout loses Endurance, or is Wounded on an result. Additionally, rescuing the Scout requires an **Explore** test to find footholds down, and an **Athletics** test to make the climb back.

Orc Ambush (Look-out – Dangerous Meeting)
The Orcs of Mount Gundabad occasionally send spies and scouts to watch over the entrance into the Long Valley.

They hide on ridges with archers waiting to ambush unsuspecting travellers. The Orcs should at least equal the number of the companions and can outnumber them by up to two to one. A Look-out can prevent an ambush attempt with an **Awareness** test.

Freezing Waters (All Companions – Strain)
Unable to find a way around it, the companions must follow a mountain stream rushing between two steep rock-faces. To do so, they must enter its frigid waters up to their waist. All companions must roll **Travel**; on a failure, a hero loses Endurance equal to the roll of a Success die.

The Lurker in the Long Valley
The Long Valley could be considered the safest way to cross the Misty Mountains north of the Gap of Isengard, if it wasn't for the threat of flooding and the many precipices filled with waterfalls that travellers must traverse (see also *The Heart of the Wild*, page 13). The presence of Goblins from Mount Gundabad would be a problem too, but the real menace hiding in the deep cleft is much worse than just Orcs...

Lurking in the crevices and fissures cut by wind and water in the rock is an ancient and foul creature. Originally a dweller of the deep places of the world, it was attracted to the surface by the blood spilt in the wars fought under the earth by Dwarves and Orcs. Once it made its lair among their peaks, the thing fed for centuries on the travellers who attempted to cross the Misty Mountains and lost their lives at the bottom of the many waterfalls of the Long Valley.

When the Men of the West crossed over to the Vales of Gundabad chasing their enemies at the time of their war against Angmar, they encountered the monster and fought it, for they could not suffer such a foulness to live. The creature retreated in front of those tall Men and their long swords of steel and, finding refuge among the roots of the mountains, it bade its time. With the passing of the centuries it finally grew hungry again, and slowly crawled back to the surface.

Today, the threat posed by the Lurker in the Long Valley is known well to the Orcs and Goblins, who have learnt how to pay tribute to it and quench its hunger from time to time: a small band of scrawny Goblins pose as bait, and provoke any traveller into chasing them into the narrow confines of a cave opening. Then, the thing emerges, taking care of the unfortunates.

The Eye is Watching

If you are using the rules for the Eye of Mordor introduced in *Rivendell* on page 111, consider the following: to keep warm, the company needs to risk lighting fires, though it may attract unwanted adversaries. Each day they don't start a fire raises their Fatigue score by 1 point, as they tire from shivering in the cold, but if they do, reduce the company's Hunt threshold by -2. If the company is revealed in the mountains, they draw the attention of an Orc patrol from Gundabad! You may use the Hazard suggestion Orc Ambush below to resolve the encounter.

Hwalda has never encountered the creature, nor has she fallen into the Goblins' trap. But she does not like the eerie silence that sometimes seems to suddenly shut out all sounds in the valley, leaving only the echo of a faint piping; heard or maybe just imagined, she could not say.

At some time during the crossing of the mountains, when the Loremaster deems it most appropriate, the Look-out of the company spots a group of Goblins traversing their path ahead of them. They seem to be carrying a bundle, vaguely human-like in shape. Fleet of foot, the Goblins start running among the rocks, along a trail descending towards a shadowy cleft among mossy rocks and trickling water...

If the companions fall for the ruse, then they track the Goblins to a dark cave opening. The weakly creatures seem to be taking their last stand, as they huddle together, swords and spears at the ready, their backs to the sheer rock wall. When the companions approach them, the heroes have barely the time to notice the discarded bundle used as bait and the unusual chill that seems to issue from the cave mouth – then, the Lurker attacks!

The monstrosity that emerges from the darkness defies description. A cluster of pincers and blade-like legs seems to explode from the dark recesses of the cavern, as an intermittent piping sound breaks the unnatural silence that had fallen on the valley. If it could be seen in its entirety, the thing could be likened to a giant, misshapen hermit crab: it pushes its crustacean front end into the cleft outside the cave, leaving its long, soft vulnerable abdomen inside the cavern opening.

The Lurker is armed with a set of long chelae and many steel-hard knobbly legs, which keep any attacker away from the small head crowned with small, pale eyes shining like opals. From its slit-like mouth issues the incessant, sickly piping that raises its tempo whenever the creature lunges to attack its enemies.

The Lurker in the Long Valley

The Lurker in the Long Valley is a powerful adversary – the companions might decide it could be time to use that 'Escape Combat' task. Cunning and experienced fighters might try to find another access to the cave the thing is hiding in, to attack its vulnerable hindquarters.

Attribute Level	
9	
Endurance	Hate
90	9
Parry	Armour
9	5d/1d*
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 0
Perception, 2	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Pincer crush	3
Leg stab	2
Special Abilities	
Deadly Elusiveness	Great Size
Weak Spot*	Horrible Strength
Savage Assault	-

Weapons:

Weapon Type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Pincer	Attribute level	8	18	Break Shield
Blade-like leg	7	10	16	Pierce

Notes

Pincer : The strong chelae of the thing can crush bones and splinter shields.
Blade-like leg: The long legs of the Lurker are as hard as steel.

The heroes can engage the thing in close combat only by choosing the Forward stance (see Deadly Elusiveness, in *Rivendell*, page 67), as the long pincers and frontal legs of the creature prevent any attacker from hitting a vulnerable spot from a distance. If the companions succeed in reducing the creature to less than half its starting Endurance score, the monster retreats into the depths of the earth, leaving a trail of black, thick blood. If they advance to explore the cave opening or to finish off the monster, they discover that the creature has slithered into an almost vertical tunnel that seems to spiral downwards into the deeps. Barring a full-fledged expedition to the centre of the earth, the companions will be left to explore just the antechamber, the room lying just beyond the cave opening...

The antechamber is bleak and barren, filled with an almost overpowering stench. Scattered about is a hoard of stolen treasures, half-buried in bones and debris: brittle weapons, splintered shields and dry rotten clothing and gear paint the sad story of many an unfortunate traveller. But among the waste lie older artefacts, relics from a past when these mountains and their underground paths saw the passage of many Dwarves: Gold coins, jewellery and other precious objects amount to a value of 40** Treasure, mostly of Dwarven craftsmanship. On top of the lot is a pale green beryl, an Elf-stone, but "whether it was set there, or let fall by chance" it's impossible to say...

What catches the eye of anyone entering the room though is an inscription graven against the rock walls of the cave opening, cut by a Man of considerable height, or by someone standing on some support.

HERE BELEGORN SON OF BERGIL OF DOL AMROTH
BANISHED THE THING FROM THE ABYSS
BUT DIED OF ITS FOUL WOUNDS
GLORFINDEL OF THE ELVES RETRIEVED HIS BODY
TO RETURN TO HIS FAMILY

The writing is in Sindarin, and it reveals how the Lurker was encountered here before, centuries ago, and how the sacrifice of a valiant Man had ultimately been in vain...

Into the Mountains of Angmar

The journey from the Grey Waste to Carn Dûm is a trek almost 200 miles long, made across daunting terrain – a leg normally taking more than a month to complete. Fortunately, Hwalda takes the companions along paths she has seen while travelling in her spirit-wolf form, twisting trails that skirt the southern foothills of the Mountains of Angmar in a north-westerly direction. When the company finally hits the Frozen Path, they must journey across it for another 40 miles north-west to reach Carn Dûm.

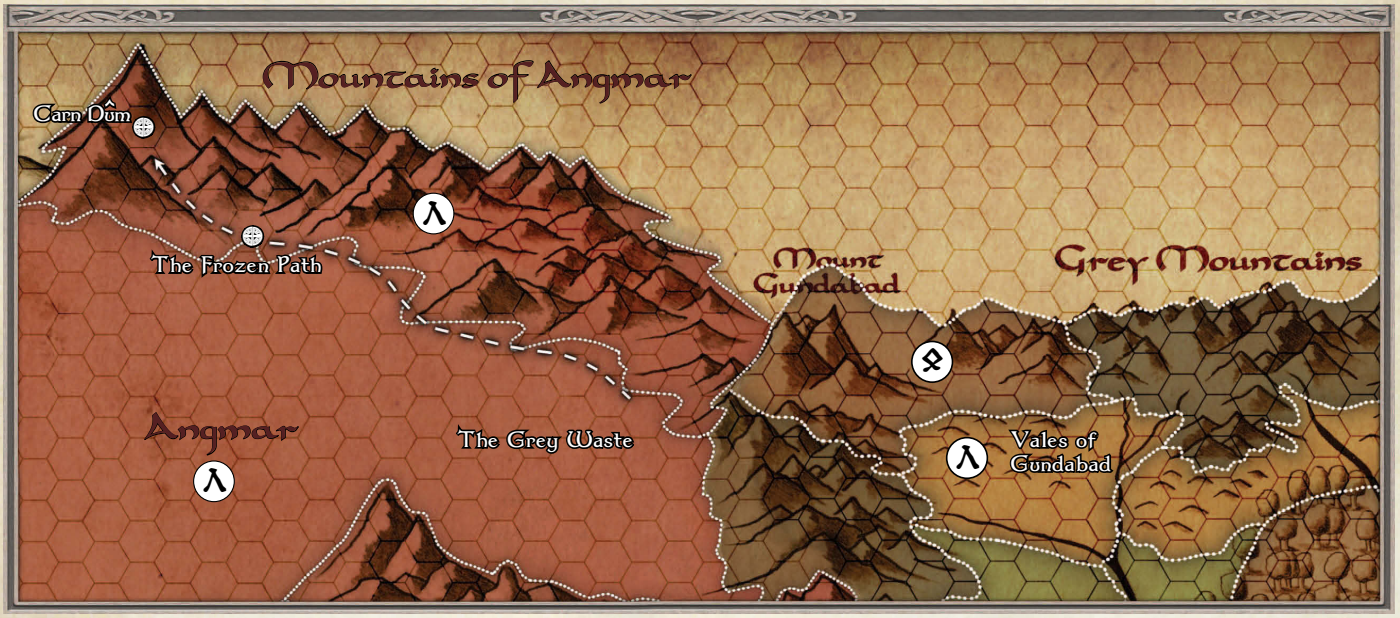
- This leg of the journey takes the company a total of 24 days, and requires 6 Fatigue tests (TN set as for the first leg).

The ancient kingdom of Angmar, the Grey Waste and the Frozen Path are described in more detail in *Rivendell*, starting from page 48.

Hazard Suggestions

Here follow suggestions to set up one or more Hazard episodes specifically for the second leg of the journey (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 160).

Orc-recruiters (Look-out, Scout or Hunter – Dangerous Meeting)
The companion stumbles upon a scene of Orc-slaughter. An Orc-chieftain and his war band are killing a group of Goblins because they refused to join them, or maybe just for 'good sport'. The big, ugly chieftain can be heard saying, "Die! You're just useless to the Witch-servant of Angmar!" If the companion fails his roll, the Orcs have noticed the approach of the company and attack. They will attempt to capture the player-heroes and bring them as captives to Carn Dûm. If the heroes allow this, they will be taken to a prison hall deep below the bowels of the



ruined citadel and must escape before they are delivered to the Witch-servant.

If using *Rivendell*, replace the Orc-Chieftain with Burzash, the Orc Warlord described on page 50, who travels with an Orc company and a pair of Mountain-trolls.

Storm of Ashes (Scout – Weariness)
While in the Grey Waste, the Scout is lost for a few hours in a cloud of ashes, blown up by stiff winds. On a failure, the companion returns to the company covered in the fine dust, and is temporarily Weary for the rest of the journey.

Whispers from the Waste (All Companions – Misery)
The company in its entirety suffers from an uneasy sleep, as whenever a hero closes his eyes, he starts hearing distant wails coming from the deserted emptiness of the Grey Waste. All companions must pass a Corruption test, or be made temporarily Miserable for the length of the journey.

Frozen Past (All Companions – Fatigue)
While the companions are on the Frozen Path, an enormous block of grey ice bars their way. Inside the thick, semitransparent boulder, a faint humanoid shape can be seen, as if someone was trapped under the ice ages ago. A closer inspection seems to indicate that something, rather than someone, is blocked in the frozen matter, as the proportions do not seem right. The companions must all work to remove the obstacle, and pass each an **Athletics** test. On a failure, companions add Fatigue again, twice on an result.

Continued Nightmares...

Sometime during the journey, yet another nightmare visits the company. As before, the dreamer is the hero with the highest Shadow points score, or the one with the lowest Hope score (the companion must again pass a Corruption test with TN 16 or gain 1 Shadow point).

This time, the details of the dream are left to the Loremaster, as the story as played thus far should provide enough inspiration for a personalised nightmare. As before, the vision may anticipate some of the events that will transpire in the accursed citadel.

- Part Five - Carn Dûm

If the companions have braved all the dangers placed before them, the heroes and their Hill-men followers finally reach the great bridge arcing out over the deep cleft known as the Red Valley. Cracked boulders and great pieces of crushed stone clutter the bottom of the chasm below, fragments of walls and towers cast down in an ancient catastrophic

battle. A narrow stream of reddish waters, rich in iron, can be seen making its way among the rubble.

On the other side of the bridge rise the ruined gates of Carn Dûm, perched atop a steep cliff of stone, the face of which is mottled with carved vents spewing plumes of vapour, indicating the operation of furnaces somewhere in the deep of the mountain. Beyond the gate, the remains of ancient structures are barely distinguishable against the night sky and the jagged peaks rising above them like a twisted crown.

The great stone bridge spans the chasm with sinister grace, joining the southern cliff with the northern rock face. Great stalactites of ice hang down from the structure, like the colossal fangs of an invisible monster.

Where is the Steward of Carn Dûm?

In *Rivendell*, on page 51, is introduced a mysterious character, he who once was a sorcerer of great power, Keeper of the Iron Crown of Angmar, the Steward of Carn Dûm. For the sake of this adventure, the Steward is considered to be hiding in his dark cell, awaiting the return of the Lord of the Nazgûl, but if the Loremaster wants to make it even harder for the companions to succeed, he may be thrown into the fray, as a sorcerous backup for Heddwyn, the Witch-servant of Angmar.

Finding a Way In

There are two ways the company can enter the ancient citadel, although it appears to them the bridge is the only way. This, they might conclude, was the plan of its builders, to force all enemies to approach the defenses exclusively through the front gates. However, there is another entrance at the base of the Red Valley, if they can find it...

- The ruins of the citadel of Carn Dûm count as a blighted place (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 223). As Angmar is in Dark Lands, the companions are required to pass two Corruption tests each day.

Ruins of Carn Dûm

1. The Frozen Path: This road leads to the great bridge, spanning across the Red Valley.

2. Secret Tunnel: This hidden entrance into the mountain opens into a tunnel, leading directly to the Vault of Heddwyn. See **Finding the Secret Tunnel.**

3. Rocky Stair: Carved into the southern cliffside, this stair was used by Goblins to descend into the Red Valley. Climbing down the stair requires an **Athletics** test. A hero who fails slips and suffers a Success die in damage. If he fails with an , he falls down several steps and suffers double damage.

4. Great Bridge: Spanning more than 100 yards, the bridge is 50-feet wide. No traces of masonry can be seen, as if the bridge had been grown out of the same stone of the two facing rock cliffs. See **Crossing the Great Bridge**.

5. Piles of Rubble: Great heaps of crushed rock, burnt wood, and metal are buried in snow across the breadth of the citadel. These used to be storehouses, barracks, armouries and smithies. Any companion successfully using **Search** may notice that some of the giant blocks have recently been rearranged, or pushed aside. A tremendous strength is needed to accomplish such a feat... (the work of the Mountain-troll sleeping nearby, see #7...).

6. The Hall of the Witch-king: The main structure of the capital, this massive building is today half its former height, the walls have been brought down and its interior exposed to the weather. Even in its current state, the former abode of the Lord of Morgul is an oppressive sight, a rotting mausoleum of greenish black stone. Many sorcerous inscriptions once decorated the interior of its walls, but the enemies of Angmar carefully effaced from the smooth surface every accursed letter, and now the walls appear pitted as if pockmarked by a virulent disease. Companions with one or more Shadow points who enter the ruined structure must pass a Wisdom test (TN 16) or see the colours of what they see slowly bleed away, leaving only a heavily blurred version of the world in black and white: they are considered to be *severely hindered* in combat (TN -4 when attacked, TN +4 when attacking) for a number of hours equal to the amount of Shadow points they possess.

7. Mural Chambers: Cut into the walls on the north side of the ruins are many recesses of variable depth and height. Anyone using **Search** will find old tools,

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weapons and shirts of Orc chain. However, in one of the larger niches sleeps a monstrous Mountain-troll on the threshold of a tall iron door. Sneaking past the Troll without awakening it, requires a roll of **Stealth**. The door is locked, but can be picked with a roll of **Craft** (the roll is automatically successful if the hero possesses the *Burglary* Trait). Inside is a hoard worth 80** Treasure! Fighting the Troll is serious business, especially if the companions still suffer from the hardness of their long journey...

8. Covered Shafts: Several openings in the western and eastern outskirts of the ruins lead to almost vertical shafts. These are covered by grates of iron and are concealed from sight by a thick cover of snow and ice, but can be discovered with a roll of **Search** (a hero succeeding in a roll of **Awareness** might notice something odd about the snow banks). Companions may lift the grates and attempt to climb down one of the shafts; the hero must make a roll of **Athletics** to slow his descent enough to grab the ledge of a side tunnel descending to a furnace room (leading to #13). If a hero fails his roll, he cannot stop his descent, and he falls straight into a chimney filled with hot steam and black soot, losing 5 Endurance points, twice as much on an ᚠ. The chimney eventually leads to a furnace (#12) and the fallen companion may exit the shaft using a iron runged ladder.

9. Guard House: This building conceals the main steps spiralling downward into the belly of the fortress. If the companions enter here, they first encounter a swirling room of grey crows who squawk and fly down the stairwell ahead of them. Heroes will recognise these as the same crows they saw the night the children were kidnapped. The stairs end at #10, the sleeping quarters.

10. Sleeping Quarters: If the companions enter this area, which contains rooms for the slaves, workers, servants, and warriors of the Witch-servant, a series of battles begins (see **Goblin Frenzy** below). The only exits from here are west to the prison hall or south to the maze.

11. Prison Hall: This dreadful hall contains dozens of barred alcoves on multiple levels. An Orc-Chieftain and several guards watch the prisoners, who consist of unruly Goblins, Men and, of course, the Hill-men children of the Vales of Gundabad. Cruel instruments of torture and murder are placed in the centre of the hall. To rescue the children, the company will need to kill the Orcs and take their keys. If they succeed, Heddwyn comes, possibly with two companions and a pair of Savage Wolfdogs (see page 9). Passageways from here lead back to the sleeping quarters, to the maze or to the vault of Heddwyn. If the companions have been captured, this is also where they will be imprisoned. They must cleverly escape before they may rescue the children.

12. Furnaces and Forges: In these halls, fires rage, fuelled by red-hot coals. Goblin slaves labour in the heat with long rakes, shovels, hammers and tongs (20-30 of them in all). They are forging steel blades, chains, and armour, tossing them in great piles. The slaves are driven by a cruel Hill-man of Rhudaur (see *Rivendell*, page 72). Companions will need to use **Stealth** to sneak past them without notice. These rooms lead to the maze.

13. The Maze: This vast section of the underbelly is a maze of endless hallways, tunnels and stairs. It is pitch black, the air is stagnant, and many segments are caved-in and littered with the skeletons of Orcs and other unidentifiable things. If the companions enter here, they need a source of light to see or they will be groping around in the darkness, making all Perception, Movement or Survival-based rolls two levels harder (if the hero is a Dwarf with the Durin's Way Virtue or the *Tunnelling* Trait, there is no hindrance). Even their combat skills are severely reduced. To escape the maze requires a prolonged action of 9 **Explore** or **Riddle** rolls. However, once they escape, a random roll of the Feat die will determine where they exit:

ᚠ:	To the sleeping quarters!
1-6:	To the furnaces and the forges!
7-10:	To the prison hall!
ᚠ:	To the vault of Heddwyn!

14. Vault of Heddwyn: The entrance to this vault is located in a recessed archway that will be spotted by anyone entering the fortress through the secret tunnel, or

heading east from the prison or the maze. It is usually guarded by two Savage Wolfdogs (see page 9). The reinforced wooden door is normally barred from the inside, but can be forced open with a roll of **Athletics** (TN 20). Otherwise, it can be chopped through with an axe requiring a prolonged action of 6 successful rolls. These are the personal quarters of Heddwyn – the Witch-servant of Angmar! He normally sleeps here, along with a couple other Hill-men companions, sprawled on his back on a lush fur rug, so that he can roam the fortress and the mountains in spirit-Warg form, gathering followers. As long as he keeps his body locked in this room, he will be safe, he thinks. Stored here are valuables equal to 30*** Treasure, most likely containing at least one Cursed Item.

Navigating the Ruins

For groups that are having a difficult time finding their way around the fortress, the Loremaster may allow rolls of Explore in exchange for clues. For example, when exploring the surface of the ruins, a successful roll may lead the player-heroes to the guard house where they find the spiral stairs down. Or, after they rescue the children, a successful roll helps them ascertain that taking the hallway east is the best route (leading to the Vault of Heddwyn), rather than returning to the sleeping quarters or heading north (into the dark maze).

Finding the Secret Tunnel

Companions who descend to the bottom of the Red Valley can easily traverse the weak stream running along the dale. Companions making rolls of **Search** may locate a passage concealed by a moveable stone against the north wall. The search can be done by either requiring one roll at TN 20, or handling it as a prolonged action, requiring 6 successes at TN 14. If the company has not accumulated 6 successes after four rounds of tests, they become temporarily Weary as the night passes into dawn.

Either way, the drawback to the search is that if anyone fails with an , they will alert several Savage Wolfdogs of the Witch-servant, who come racing through the tunnel when the stone blocking the passage is moved aside. The Hill-men companions will be surprised to see the dogs and guess that they were stolen as pups.

If the company wins the fight, they can head west in the tunnel, eventually coming to a three-way intersection. To the left is the vault of Heddwyn; to the right is the maze; and continuing west, the echo of crying children is heard.

Crossing the Great Bridge

The Witch-king's former abode looks impressive when seen across the great bridge, even in its current ruinous state. The main iron gate lays twisted and broken, its pieces entwined with the splintered stones of a once-magnificent arch. Beyond the gate, what appears to be a central keep remains intact more than anything else, but wide gaps open in its dark walls.

The main stronghold of Angmar could not be in greater ruin, but watching the red steam rise from the vents in the cliff face leaves no doubt among the companions that the heart of the fortress is beating still.

If a hero recalls the first nightmare, he might be wary of the danger that lies ahead, lowering the difficulty of the upcoming tests by one level:

- When the companions set foot upon the bridge, "a dark shape, like a cloud and yet not a cloud" seems to detach from the top of one of the mountain peaks above. Partly obscured by the cruel weather, the shape grows larger, as a piercing cry strikes terror in the hearts of the companions: everyone must make a Fear test against TN 18. Those who fail fall to the ground shaking, and are daunted for the rest of the day (they cannot spend Hope). Then, the shadow passes: as it appeared, the black shape disappears into the clouded sky.

- Seconds later, an ill gust of foul air sweeps through the Red Valley below. The heroes feel the bridge under their feet sway, as if the wind multiplied their weight! Great frozen icicles detach from the bridge, carrying with them large chunks of the stonework. All

companions must make a roll of **Athletics** to dash across the remaining length of the bridge. If three or more companions fail their roll, a large section of the bridge collapses behind them, sending pieces of rock hurtling down into the bottom of the cleft. The way back has just become more complicated...

Goblin Frenzy!

If the company enters the sleeping quarters (# 10) from the stairs, they immediately trigger the attention of the Goblins of Carn Dûm. From this point on, no matter where they hide, Goblins will always be lurking around the corner. They have been breeding lately, and their numbers are too great to count!

- Starting now, whenever an is rolled, more Goblins of Carn Dûm arrive at the end of the round to attack the company (roll a Success die to see how many). This is in addition to other enemies, and regardless of their location, as long as they are underground.

The companions will need to win the following two battles to progress to the Witch-servant's prison halls where the children are being held captive. They can make a preliminary roll of **Battle** as usual.

1. Battle of the Crow's Den

Grey crows fly into a room squawking, *"Wake up! Wake up!"* A few moments later, armed warriors emerge. Run the fight using two Hill-men of Rhudaur for every companion (see *Rivendell*, page 72). Once this battle is finished, they must decide whether to proceed further west into the sleeping chambers to battle on (see **The Goblin Pit** below), escape south into a more obscure passage (see **The Maze** above), or go back up the stairs into the guard house.

2. The Goblin Pit

Brave adventurers coming this direction will wonder if they made the right decision! Before they know it, Goblins of Carn Dûm seem to be crawling over wall and ceiling, swarming over them like ants on a piece of dropped fruit. The creatures engage the companions three each. When one dies, another takes its place at the start of the next round (see *Rivendell*, page 71, or else use the profile for Goblin Archers found in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*).

Whenever a hero or Goblin rolls a , make a note of it. When the number rolled equals the number of companions, the Goblins are suddenly called away and disappear out of sight.

If the companions take the stairs south from here, they soon hear the cries of the children in the prison hall...

- Part Six -
An Unexpected Foe

The encounter with Heddwyn can happen in one of two ways: by finding him in his vault after accessing the secret tunnel, or by encountering him immediately upon rescuing the children. Either way, he is likely to be accompanied by four Hill-men warriors of Gundabad and a couple of Savage Wolfdogs. If the company finds him in his vault, they will encounter his body directly; but if he shows up after the rescue, he may manifest either physically or in spirit-Warg form (his Hill-men bodyguards appear in the same guise as their master).

If encountered in spirit form, Essylt does not recognise her father or the others, for the corruption of their souls have twisted their countenance and form. She will, however, be alarmed seeing that there are spirit-Wargs here in Carn Dûm. Were more than children kidnapped from the Vales of Gundabad? The spirit-Wargs will fight the player-heroes, but they will disappear or retreat back to the vault of Heddwyn if they are seriously injured.

Once the company encounters Heddwyn in the flesh, Essylt and Fráech will immediately recognise the tall Hill-man warrior. Essylt is devastated and gasps at the revelation: first that he is alive, and second that he is alive in Carn Dûm. Everything has been leading to this moment, when he will make his appeal for her to join him. The resonance of his voice fills the room.

"Essylt, my love! It has been long since I last laid eyes on you. I have been calling to you and you have come. Great things lie ahead for us and our people. Nevermore shall we hide in the Black Hills. Look about you! This fortress is our new home. Soon, a king will return, powerful and generous to his servitors. Why ally yourself with these beggars and liars? Join me and you will live as a Queen in Angmar!"

Then, Heddwyn utters words of power in an unknown tongue, while raising up his right hand and facing the companions. All player-heroes must pass a Corruption test against TN 16, or fall victim to Heddwyn's *Red Madness* spell (see overleaf).

Key Moment: Test of Will

If all the companions are able to resist Heddwyn's spell, Essylt will admire them for their strong spirit and be influenced positively. If any of them fail and display their weaknesses, she will be frightened and influenced negatively.

Essylt's Reply

The fate of Essylt, Fráech, and the Hill-men children is now decided. One of the companions might attempt a final plea for Essylt to join them against her father. A roll of **Awe**, **Inspire** or **Persuade** would be appropriate: the difficulty is set at TN 20, but it is modified up or down depending on how many times Essylt was positively or negatively influenced. Lower the TN by one level each time she was positively influenced and raise it by one level each time she was negatively influenced.

For example, if the player-heroes influenced her positively 3 times and negatively 2 times, the TN will be modified by one level down to TN 18.

If the companion fails the test, Essylt concedes her will and subjects herself to her father. If the test is passed, she chooses to be free, and sides with the companions.

Fighting Heddwyn

Essylt and Fráech will not fight Heddwyn directly if Essylt sides with the companions, but they will join the battle against them if she joins her father. Use the statistics for Hill-men Warriors and Spirit-Wargs (see *The Heart of the Wild*, page 115). Heddwyn will fight the companions to the death, using all of his powers to stop them. If the companions win, they need to escape the fortress with the children.

Heddwyn, the Witch-servant of Angmar

Heddwyn is wholly under the domination of the Witch-king and he will even kill Essylt if she stands in his way. He is clad in ancient armour and has been turned by the Witch-king into a powerful adversary by sorcerous means (as his *Dreadful Spells* and *Reckless Hate* special abilities testify).

Heddwyn the Witch-servant of Angmar:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
26	6
Parry	Armour
6	2d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 3
Movement, 2	Custom, 3
Perception, 2	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Spear	3
Short sword	2
Special Abilities	
Strike Fear (TN 16)	Dreadful Spells
Reckless Hate*	-

*Heddwyn may spend 1 point of Hate to recover 6 Endurance points (his Attribute level), up to its maximum Endurance rating (see *Reckless Hate*, in *Rivendell*, page 68).

Dreadful Spells of the Witch-servant of Angmar
When Heddwyn uses *Dreadful Spells*, the Loremaster chooses one spell from among the following two. The TN for all Corruption tests is 16.

Frost and Thaw: A companion failing the Corruption test starts suffering from the effects of extreme cold, as if exposed to a freezing wind. The hero is made temporarily Weary for the length of the encounter.

Red Madness: On a failed Corruption test, the targeted hero is made temporarily Miserable for the length of the encounter. Should the hero fall prey to a bout of madness (on the roll of an), he will be overcome by an uncontrollable rage and turns against his friends and allies.

The Loremaster takes control of the hero and attacks the other companions, for a number of rounds equal to 10 minus the Wisdom score of the companion.

Weapons:

Weapon Type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Spear	6	9	14	Pierce
Short sword	5	10	16	Disarm

Heddwyn as Spirit-Warg:

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
20	5*
Parry	Armour
6	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 0
Perception, 2	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Bite	3
Special Abilities	
Great Leap	Fear of Fire

*If reduced to 0 Hate, 0 Endurance or Wounded while in Spirit-warg form, Heddwyn retreats back to his sleeping body in the vault. Any damage sustained is not transferred to Heddwyn's physical form (this applies to Heddwyin's bodyguards too).

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	4	10	16	Pierce

- Epilogue - To Rivendell

Out of the fortress, the companions will most likely find themselves in the Red Valley, where they breathe in the crisp, cold air. If Essylt, Fráech and the children are with them, they intend to go back to the Vales of Gundabad and persuade their kin to make allies with the Free Folk of the North and to drive the Goblins and Wild Wolves from the Black Hills.

If the company found any Treasure, Hwalda (or their other guide) reminds them of their contract. *"It was a pleasure doing business... friends, but we must part ways. If we shall journey together again, you'll find me among my kin. Even if it will take a while for me to recover my will to wander the land!"*

The companions should say their goodbyes and make ready to leave...

A Fateful Meeting

If the companions have fought the Lurker in the Long Valley and have found the Elf-stone hidden among its treasure hoard, a tall cloaked figure emerges suddenly from the rocky stair. The stranger removes his hood, revealing golden hair and fair features. He is one of the Elven-folk!

"Well met, wanderers. I have come from the house of Elrond over many dangerous leagues looking for you, even though I didn't know you before this day. Several days ago a sad remembrance was stirred in my heart, and I left my home to find out the answer to this riddle."

The Elf is Glorfindel, and the memory he is talking about is the death of Belegorn, the Man of Gondor who almost one thousand years ago died fighting against the thing in the Long Valley...

"But you seem tired, and careworn. Come now, drink this! It will give you strength and vigour." Glorfindel offers each companion a sip of his leather flask: it is miruvor, the cordial of Imladris, and each draught from it restores a number of Endurance points equal to the drinker's favoured Heart's score plus the roll of a Success die (see *Rivendell*, page 17).

Glorfindel asks the companions to tell him their story. When the Elf-lord realises that there is a lot to say, he will add:

"Follow me to the house of Elrond. I am sure the master of Imladris will be interested in your tales, and it seems that we are joined in our cause against the oncoming darkness. In Rivendell you will find rest, and many answers."

Journey to the Last Homely House

Glorfindel guides the company to the Last Homely House, opening the way leading his horse Asfaloth on foot. The journey is a trek of approximately 400 miles south through Angmar, the Lone-lands and finally along the great East Road to Rivendell, taking almost two months in all.

Such a long voyage can be resolved by splitting the journey into three legs: the first leg, south through Angmar and the Grey Waste takes 30 days on foot, requiring 8 Fatigue tests; the second leg through the empty, Lone-lands takes 21 days and requires 6 tests; the last leg lasts 3 days along the Great East Road, requiring 1 Fatigue test. All difficulties for the tests can be set at TN 14, a benefit of the presence of Glorfindel as a Guide.

Once in Rivendell, the companions are welcomed by Elrond Halfelven. For the moment, the company has slowed the progress of Angmar, and for that they are welcome to spend the Fellowship phase in the Last Homely House, before venturing off into the world once more.

harder than - stone -

- **When:** This quest could be set in the very late spring of any year between 2954 and 2977.
- **Where:** The adventure begins along the great East Road, returns to Rivendell, then heads into the north, through the Trollshaws and the Coldfells, eventually ending in the Ettenmoors.
- **What:** A Dwarven caravan was ransacked by a group of Human Bandits working with Trolls led by an "Ogre Captain". The company is asked to discover more about this unusual arrangement and who or what the "captain" actually is.
- **Why:** Elrond of Rivendell asks the company to do it, offering his gratitude.
- **Who:** The object of the quest is Captain Mormog, a favoured agent of Sauron who has been sent into the West to foment trouble and stir up the Trolls. Another mysterious figure lurks in the dark, and might help the company to shed some light on the Captain's identity.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into six parts, which begin and end along the mighty river Hoarwell.

Part One - Road Maintenance

The company rescues the last few survivors of a waylaid Dwarven caravan from a pack of vicious bandits, who consisted of both Men and Trolls, before escorting them to Rivendell.

Part Two - At the House of Elrond

The company is tasked by Elrond into discovering more about the highly suspect "Ogre Captain" who was leading the bandits.

Part Three - Picking up the Trail

The company heads into the wild after the "Ogre Captain" through the dangerous Trollshaws and on into the barren Coldfells.

Part Four - Deep Plans

The company explore the ruins of an ancient keep, discovering that the riddle they are trying to solve is more complicated than it seems.

Part Five - Bargains in the Night

The company is approached by an Agent of Sauron who wishes to make a most unusual bargain with them in exchange for help against Mormog.

Part Six - Into the Ettendales

The company travels east into the region known as the Ettendales. In a remote valley, the companions learn of Captain Mormog's plans for Eriador.

Epilogue - The Black Voice

The company returns to Rivendell with what they've learned about Captain Mormog and what he intends for the North.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in *Rivendell*, any revelation episodes occurring during this adventure are likely to revolve around the servants of Captain Mormog discovering the company, or minions that they encounter proving to be far deadlier than expected. Be careful about alerting Mormog of their presence too soon, however, as he is a deadly foe; similarly, Feredrûn should not be turned from ally to enemy, as this will affect the course of the adventure too much.

- Part One - Road Maintenance

Deep, fast, and aching cold are the waters of mighty Mitheithel as it flows down from the Misty Mountains in the late spring. Called Hoarwell by the Men of Eriador, the river runs in a great curve from its headwaters above the

Ettenmoors, along the western edge of both the Coldfells and the Trollshaws, before eventually being joined by the River Bruinen and flowing away south. The only safe crossing of the Hoarwell is the Last Bridge, an ancient stone structure consisting of three arches spanning the river at the bottom of a deep gorge which rests along the south-western edge of the Trollshaws. The Last Bridge lies along the great East Road built by the Dwarves in ages past, though none are left that can remember whether they built the bridge too or whether it was the work of the Men of the West, who certainly had a hand in expanding it.

Regardless of its provenance, the Last Bridge and the road it sits upon are essential for those travelling east or west, and the Master of Imladris makes it his business to maintain them such as they are, within a week's journey of his home. Unfortunately, the floods brought by this year's thawing may have damaged portions of the road and possibly even the Last Bridge itself.

The adventure begins with the company on an errand for the Folk of Rivendell, so they are supposed to have gained entrance to the Last Homely House. They have been sent to accompany an Elvish stone-mason named Gondril as she travels along the great East Road to the Last Bridge to assess how well it weathered the winter.

If the group is following the events of **Nightmares of Angmar**, the company might accept the task as a token of good-will towards the Master of the House. If one or more of the company are Hobbits of the Shire, or travelling Dwarves, perhaps they've agreed to meet their friends in late Spring near the Last Bridge as they journey to the west of Eriador.

The Shattered Caravan

The player-heroes reach the Last Bridge after three days of travel (no roll is required, as the trip is a very short one). The Hoarwell is roaring, strong and fierce, but the Last Bridge looks untouched by the winter and appears to be holding up fine. Characters with the *Stone-craft* Trait can tell at a glance that the bridge was made to endure for ages and remains faultless. Gondril declares as much after spending some time making certain.

While the characters are inspecting the bridge, a companion succeeding in an **Awareness** roll notices that a wooden object, and not just driftwood, is wedged under one of the arches of the bridge. It is half submerged by the running waters, so it is not possible to determine exactly what it is without getting closer.

To safely retrieve the object from the river requires an **Athletics** roll (TN 16). While the river is cold and swift, there are many points along the bridge where a character can securely fasten himself before they go "fishing". Any character with the *Swimming* Trait can succeed automatically. If a companion fails his **Athletics** test, he is made temporarily Weary until a prolonged rest by the cold waters of the river.

The object proves to be several wooden planks connected by a crossbar. One side of the planks are painted a bright green.

Any character with an applicable Trait such as *Boating* or *Woodwright* can tell that the object hasn't been in the water very long. *Woodwright* also reveals the handiwork of the smooth joining of the planks to be of Dwarven origin,

Gondril

Gondril is talented carver of stone, though young by Elven standards (she is only 437 years old...). She is a thoughtful lady, often given to quiet introspection but followed by swift, decisive actions in her work. While she isn't much of a fighter, she will absolutely insist on helping out – meaning somebody will have to constantly keep an eye on her if trouble starts.

Attribute level:	5
Specialties:	Stone-craft
Distinctive Features:	Bold, Elusive
Relevant Skills:	Craft ♦♦♦, Long sword ♦♦
Endurance:	18

likely from a wagon of some sort. A **Riddle** roll can reveal more: on a success, the hero notes that the edges of the wood have been roughly hacked, chopped apart with either an axe or a sword; a great success or better notes notches in the wood that indicate where arrows were retrieved.

If none of the company think about it, Gondril suggests they should look about upriver, to the north of the road. If they do so, they easily find the remains of a campsite some forty paces or so back from the road, where a battle of some sort clearly occurred.

Anyone succeeding in either a **Search** or **Hunting** roll finds evidence that someone attempted to cover the remains of two different sets of wagon tracks that were clearly located beside the camp, along with several pack mules. There are bloodstains on the rocks and some of the bushes around the campsite. On a great success, a companion finds and identifies separate tracks belonging to Men, Dwarves, and one or more Trolls.

It is hard to determine exactly what happened here, as someone clearly went out of their way to obscure their actions. A successful **Lore** roll may indicate that Trolls are not clever enough to conceal their activities (someone with the *Troll-Lore* Trait knows this automatically). What can be gleaned with appropriate rolls (**Riddle**, **Hunting**, **Search**) is that survivors of the fight headed northwards, deeper into the dense woods of the Trollshaws, carrying heavy burdens, and that at least one among them is a Troll.

When the time to decide what to do arrives, Gondril will listen to what the company has to say first, but she will then insist that they follow and see if there are survivors that the company can help, or, if not, be able to report what happened.

If the company fails to find anything of interest, or if they choose to ignore what they've seen, they get ambushed by the bandits led by Amos the Stone-troll (see opposite) as they are sleeping one night on the way back to Rivendell. The Look-Out Man should get a decent chance to spot them beforehand (they aren't the stealthiest bunch), but then the fight is on. From there, the companions may have more reasons to follow the trail of any survivors and find about the Dwarves...

Into the Trollshaws

Once they managed to get a long bowshot from the road, the bandits stopped bothering to conceal their tracks. Adventurers who are worth their salt should not find it too hard to follow their trail.

- The company need only accumulate a total of 3 successful **Hunting** rolls (or the application of some relevant Virtue, as the Rangers' *Rumor of the Earth*, for example). Once they hit the trail, it takes them just over an hour to get to the bandit's camp.

The encampment is located not far from the river, between two large hillocks in a particularly dense copse of tall beeches and willows. This is no accident – the deep shade enables Trolls to safely rest without having to hide underground during the day. If the companions reach the camp trying to be discreet (they propose **Stealth** rolls) they will be able to ambush the bandits at their leisure. Failing to consider this means each side is aware of the other before battle is joined.

What Really Happened Here?

Two nights ago, a band of outlaws and a pack of Trolls led by Mormog, the "Ogre" Captain, plundered a Dwarven caravan that was heading east. After killing the majority of the Dwarves, the bandits took the bulk of their stolen supplies back to their camp, along with a few prisoners destined for the Trolls' "larder". They got rid or concealed any material they didn't want to keep, and threw the bodies of the slain into the river.

Finally, they chopped up the two wagons, as they could not use them in the broken terrain of the Trollshaws: they kept some of the pieces for firewood, and tossed the remains into the river.

When they attacked the Dwarves they were led by Mormog, their Captain, but the mysterious monster left the camp the morning after the attack on the caravan.

The Bandit Camp

The bandits consist of "Sergeant Cyrnan", a rugged cutthroat accompanied by four hardened-looking Men (add two Men for every character in the company) and Amos, a Stone-troll. Men and Trolls do not normally work side by side, *everybody* knows that, yet these clearly are.

The camp is a simple affair with a one small fire pit in the centre of a clearing before the hillocks and a particularly large one off to the side. Several tents and lean-tos are scattered about. One of the hillocks has a strangely shaped massive wooden door on its side, which looks like it was built using parts from the hull of a boat.

Three large sacks lie against the other hillock. *Keen-eyed* companions and those succeeding in an **Awareness** roll note that one of the Dwarf-sized sacks occasionally squirms...

If the characters didn't alert the bandits to their presence, Cyrnan and several others are sitting about the smaller fire pit, talking. After a time, a Troll with a belly of prodigious girth emerges through the boat-door and walks around the edge of the hillock to a large keg situated in the shadow of the trees. Once there, he fills up a small barrel that has clearly been converted into a flagon, before joining the Men.The Troll is protected by the rays of the Sun by the shadow of the hills and the dense trees, but still walks about with a measure of circumspection, squinting fiercely. Companions do not need to make a roll to guess that this behaviour is indicative of a Stone-troll...

The companions must decide what to do. They might exploit the vegetation to get close enough to the camp and hear the bandits' conversation without being noticed. If they wait too long, the Troll eventually makes a wide-grinned comment to one of the younger bandits, who visibly pales slightly, before he heads back into the hillock, laughing with a deep, booming voice. The other bandits finish their meal soon after and move off to do chores about the camp. At this point, the chances of the companions to remain unnoticed decrease sharply (any TN is raised by one level).

If the characters moved closer to hear the bandits and the Troll, they are talking about their recent raid and their "new orders". After a while, the younger bandit lowers his voice and asks his fellows, *"What happens when Amos gets hungry and his larder's out?"* The Troll overhears this and replies in semi-broken Westron, *"Don't fret, little Man, the Cap'n have my bones fer his stew if I put any of yer on the spit. Sides, I like yer. I'd just et yer leg at most,"* followed by his rough laughter.

Choices and Challenges

If the companions remained hidden, they have several choices available to them. A particularly stealthy character could try to slip into the camp and save the prisoners, though if they try this before an attack, this runs the risk of the frightened Dwarves crying out and rob the company of the advantage of surprise. If they wish to attempt a rescue in advance, read the section on the **Survivors** below, to gauge how the Dwarves may react.

If the heroes have figured out that Amos is a Stone-troll, then they have a distinct advantage over him in a fight, as they might use the light of the Sun to concentrate on dealing with the bandits and worry about the Stone-troll afterwards.

The characters can certainly ambush the camp with a clear conscience. These Men have robbed and murdered travellers on the road, as well as plainly standing by while their Troll compatriot is pondering on how to consume his Dwarves; they are unmistakably ruthless villains. Should they attempt to parlay with them, any discussion and **Persuasion** roll is wasted on them, but an extraordinary **Awe** roll could send some of them packing... or encourage them to shoot the presumptive braggart on a failure!

Gondril is not much of a fighter, but she will still want to help however she can. Depending on how the characters direct her, she could be either an asset or a liability. She will not "just stay back" once fighting starts...

If combat erupts, the Bandits will try to let loose with arrows before wading into melee (unless surprised). Cyrnan directs his Men to ruthlessly finish off any adventurer who falls down (see their *No Quarter* special ability). At some point during the battle, if half or more of the bandits are defeated, the youngest-looking one (the one who spoke to Amos) tries to surrender; Cyrnan promptly cuts him down from behind. Soon after, the rest will lose their stomach for the fight and flee into the Trollshaws, trying to escape pursuit.

If the adventurers manage to take one of the bandits alive, they will find that they are one and all, vicious outlaws and unwilling to say much about their business.

Ruthless Bandits:

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
14	3
Parry	Armour
4	1d + 1
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Sword	2
Bow	1
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	-

Sergeant Cyrnan:

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
22	5
Parry	Armour
5	2d + 1
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 2
Perception, 2	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Sword	3
Special Abilities	
Commanding Voice	No Quarter

Dealing with Amos

Amos has the same stats as a standard Stone-troll (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 245). While he isn't the "sharpest sword in the armoury", he is wary of being tricked into coming out into direct sunlight and will try to make his stand inside the cavern. The confined corners

of the cave are wide enough to admit three characters to engage the Troll in close combat, but no one is allowed to assume a Rearward stance. The room certainly counts as underground if any Dwarves have the *Durin's Way* Virtue.

The characters' options here are only limited to their cunning: they could try to set a fire and smoke Amos out of his cave, they could cut down parts of the covering that is keeping the camp in the shade. They might even try to talk to him. A successful **Persuade** roll could get Amos to bargain for his life, though he will not deal with Dwarves in any way, shape or form (other than violently). *True-hearted* and *Trusty* companions succeed automatically. If they choose to negotiate, Amos will only believe the characters if they swear a sacred oath on their honour to let him go. Breaking such an oath is a misdeed worth 2 Shadow points.

Should Amos broker a deal with the characters, the companions will face the wrath of the rescued Dwarven prisoners. They will absolutely insist that the Stone-troll be slain, to avenge their fallen brethren. The Dwarves will be both incredulous and furious if any character let the Stone-troll go, but their obligation to their rescuers will cause them to keep their peace after a while (though they will neither forgive nor forget the insult).

If Amos somehow manages to survive, he will flee north as soon as the light allows him to do so, to report to "his Cap'n". If anything Amos witnessed or overheard about the characters could be used against them in a confrontation with Mormog, it will be.

The Troll cave has a larder the heroes won't want to look too closely in. In a side alcove sit a number of large clay pots holding a mishmash of gold and silver coins, along with a few bright gems and a series of Dwarven rune-stamped gold ingots. The whole Hoard is worth Treasure 50*, a good 40 of which at least was stolen from the Dwarven prisoners. A successful **Riddle** roll notes that there are clearly a number of clay pots missing; smooth round spaces on the dirt floor where pots were sitting till just recently.

The Survivors

Anar, Vidar and Ginar are the only survivors of the Dwarven caravan. They were travelling east from the Blue Mountains to Erebor. Anar and Vidar are brothers, whereas Ginar is the son of Vidar. There is no need to set Tolerance for this Encounter – the characters just saved three Dwarves from a Stone-troll's gullet and the Dwarves in question are far beyond pleased to make the company's acquaintance. All three bow low, introducing themselves by name and adding the Dwarven greeting-honorific: *"(Name) at your service!"*

All three Dwarves are ill-used, battered and weary; a shadow of fear is still clearly on them, their eyes haunted. All three are in rough tunics, their mail having been stripped away. Anar and Vidar are unmistakably brothers, so similar are they in appearance. Both of their once-fine beards are now dirty and roughed-up, Vidar's especially: the bandits tore some of his gold beard-braids out forcibly. Ginar's sports a much shorter russet beard – the younger Dwarf is actually a female, Vidar's daughter! This is no secret for any Dwarf in the company, of course, the differences are for them plain to see, but it is impossible for anyone else to notice it. This piece of information should be provided secretly to any Dwarf hero, along with the fact that traditionally Dwarves never share such secrets with anyone not belonging to their folk...

The caravan was attacked at night as they camped along the great East Road. They were ambushed by bandits, several Stone-trolls, and something else... They claim that the attack was led by a horrifying figure – a massive Ogre right out of old legends. Anar states:

"Their leader, I've never seen anything like him. Big. Fast. Nothing so massive has the right to move so quickly, like one of the great mountain bears. He bore a wicked notched sword. It was huge. He cut poor Narvi in half with a single stroke. One of the bandits called him, 'Captain'. I've never seen anything like him."

Vidar adds on to his brother's words. *"He was like to an Ogre, from the old tales."* His voice drops to a hoarse whisper that still manages to carry far. *"And he spoke the Black Speech."*

Ginar adds quietly:

"His voice... Till the end of my days, I will hear that voice... Like fear, given breath... And there was someone with him,

something else that kept to the shadows... They were in a rush when they left, the following day, several of the Men spoke together about still having to go to the Coldfells and being behind schedule."

The Dwarves can remember little else about their ordeal, other than that they heard the "Captain" leaving sometime early last night, taking several Trolls and Men with him. If any of the characters decides to do a **Search** or **Hunting** roll north of the camp, they easily find a trail smashed through the woods by several large creatures, heading north, deeper into the Trollshaws.

The Dwarves clearly need help. Gondril will insist that the best course of action is to escort them back to Rivendell at once. The characters can sort out the Treasure with the Dwarves as they see fit; the Dwarves really aren't in a position to argue, but they will definitely remember how honourably the company deals with them and "their stolen wealth," as will Gondril.

- Part Two - At the House of Elrond

The journey back to the Last Homely House takes another three days. Fortunately the weather is fine, so the company travels at a decent speed, regardless of the presence of three weary Dwarves. Soon after passing the borders of the Trollshaws and moving into the foothills that lead up towards the Misty Mountains, riders appear unexpectedly to the east and swiftly approach the characters. These outriders from Rivendell take in a brief summary of the characters' tidings of what occurred and after passing over some extra supplies, return to tell the house of their coming.

When the companions first arrive in sight of Rivendell, wonder fills the eyes of the Dwarves as they tread the path going down into the valley. The doors of the house are flung open, and several Elves come to take care of the Dwarves and calmly usher them away. Lindir, the seneschal of the house welcomes the heroes and invites them to eat and drink their fill in the great hall, then to get a good night's rest, for they are to meet with Master Elrond himself in the morning. Presuming they brought her back safely, Gondril thanks the company "for the adventure" and states that she will pass on the tale of their bravery.

A company that has played through **Nightmares of Angmar** (see page 7) has seen Rivendell and met Elrond already. Companions who never entered the secret valley before will certainly take the chance to take a look around: the information presented in *Rivendell* starting on page 6 can be used to improvise a memorable session of exploration and discovery.

Meeting Elrond

In the early morning, Lindir comes to wake the characters and invite them to join Elrond at the eastern porch. The sun hasn't even risen all the way above the Misty Mountains yet. Elrond meets the companions wearing a simple blue robe lined with silver, held with a Mithril belt that glitters in the rising light. He asks the company to sit in chairs placed in a semi-circle with a kindly smile, before settling into a chair set across from them. He softly thanks the characters for coming before the break of day.

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the Encounter by keeping track of how many successes the player-heroes achieve during the Introduction and Interaction stages (see *The One Ring*, page 189). The total will be used to determine exactly what Elrond expects of the company and what he will offer them in turn.

Set Tolerance

The starting Tolerance for this encounter is based on the average (rounded up) of the highest Valour and Wisdom ratings in the company; Elrond Halfelven has seen three Ages of the world, long enough to know that every quest requires Valour and Wisdom both before its end. Increase the Tolerance by 1 for each Ranger and Elf in the company. Elrond finds himself looking with far more favour on the folk of Durin these days, so Dwarves do not decrease Elrond's Tolerance. Standing means little to him, however, unless companions have received the *Friend of Elrond* title (see *Rivendell*, page 22).

Introduction

The eyes of Elrond shine perceptibly in the darkness of the porch like two luminous stars as he regards each character in turn with great attentiveness when they are

speaking. Elrond expects each player-hero to introduce themselves individually (companions who are already known to Elrond are asked to briefly summarise what happened in the Trollshaws). **Courtesy** would be the best option for most characters, but neither does he object to a good tale, so some heroes may avail themselves of **Song**. Anyone attempting to use **Awe** on the Master of Imladris will be quietly regarded as very foolish and ignored for the rest of the encounter.

Interaction

By the time the characters have finished speaking, the first rays of the sun have finally begun to shine fully on the valley of Imladris. Elrond stands and walks about the porch, and starts explaining why he asked to see the companions.

"I made this valley my home in the Second Age of this world. A place of healing, of refuge. A stronghold of wisdom. A house filled with light to hold the darkness at bay.

"There is a riddle I have thought on many times, perhaps because it has no true answer. Whose is the greater calling? The scholar who knows the ways to heal a wound, or the warden who prevents it from ever occurring?"

Elrond listens with interest to the company's opinions. There is no right answer, rather it is a test of sorts to see how the characters think. The players may propose different ability rolls to support their views, and **Insight**, **Lore** and **Riddle** can all be used to help define each characters' answer to the conundrum and how well they express it.

After the characters have finished, Elrond states:

"While we need to give them time to heal, I have spoken a little with the Dwarves you rescued. Vidar and his brother fought at the Battle of Nanduhirion and are not like to forget what they learned on that blood-soaked field. What do you make of these bandits and their... singular Captain?"

The characters can answer as they will. **Lore** rolls, suitable Traits or any other appropriate skills may be used as needed to help them bolster or back up their opinions. Take note of what they say (and any successes) as it will temper Elrond's final response.

Elrond's Task

At the end of the encounter, Elrond has probably heard enough to determine that the company will serve for the mission he has in mind, though their cumulative successes over the encounter will determine exactly how much he expects from them and what he ultimately offers in return.

"Far to the south lies the black land of Mordor, but not far enough, I deem. I see the hand of the Shadow in this

and my heart bids me to act. It is in my mind to send you forth after this 'Captain' who knows the Black Speech; to discover as far as you are able who he is, and what he is about here in the West.

"If you agree, you must go at once. While he is perhaps four or five days ahead of you, his Stone-troll companions will slow his progress, as they cannot abide the light of the Sun. If he is truly headed north into the Coldfells, you should be able to pick up his trail in the Trollshaws."

Presuming the company agrees to undertake the mission, Elrond's offer is determined by how much they have managed to impress him. Compare their successful rolls so far with the entries below.

1: Elrond is not exactly impressed with the company and wonders if he made an error in judgment. He implies that doing this task for him is what is required to keep the company in his good graces and still welcome in the halls of Imladris.

2-4: Elrond regards the company as young and perhaps rash, and does not trust them enough to give them more confidential information or support. This said, he concludes that you must use what tools you have to hand...

5-6: The companions have won the trust of Elrond, showing both wit and spirit. The Master of Imladris offers them a flask of Erestor's Travelling Cordial (see *Rivendell*, page 17).

7+: Elrond believes the companions may just be some of the heroes he has been seeking for the dark times to come. Apply the result for the entry above. Additionally, should the company succeed in the task, Elrond will propose himself a patron for the company in the future.

If the company agrees to undertake Elrond's quest, the Master of Imladris summons Lindir to make sure that the companions' need for provisions and travelling gear are swiftly being seen to. Then, he presents the characters with a map of the region, showing the Trollshaws and the Coldfells beyond.

Lindir and Elrond briefly speak about what awaits them if they haven't travelled in the region before, noting that the lands they are heading to are far from the abodes of Men or Elves – the wastes north of Imladris are Troll country.

Characters with the appropriate Traits (*Old-lore, Elven-lore* or similar) know that the lands they are to travel through were once part of the eastern border of the realm of Arnor, before becoming part of the kingdom of Rhudaur. Its history has ever been troubled, its final kings were of Hillmen, not Númenórean, descent, and they were vassals of the dreaded kingdom of Angmar. All that remains of them are ruins amidst the cracked highlands and old, sad songs. When the preparations are over, the companions can be off when they want to, but they better hurry. When they are finally ready to go, Elrond wishes them good luck and sees them on their way.

- Part Three -
Picking up the Trail

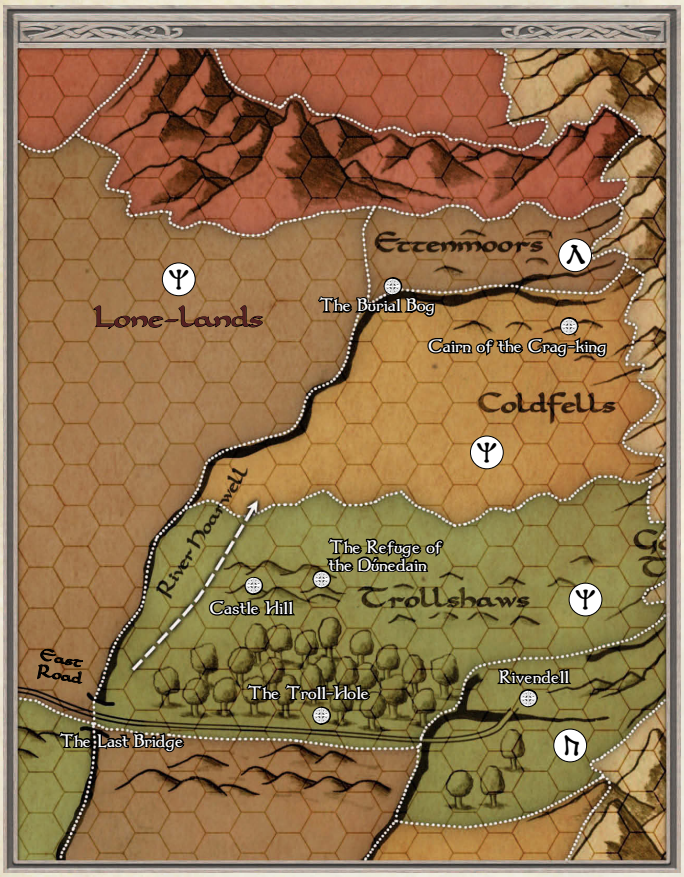
It takes three days to return to the bandit's camp, where the companions can endeavour to pick up the trail. Other than having endured one or two light rains, the encampment has not changed much from how the company left it. If any of the companions searched the north of the bandit camp when they were first there and found their quarry's trail, they automatically pick it up again. If not, a **Search** or **Hunting** roll will pick up the correct trail heading north.

- If the company fails all their rolls, or someone rolls an they have found one or more false trails that resemble the true one too closely to be certain. The companions are made temporarily Weary for as long as they remain in the Trollshaws, to represent the exhaustion that comes from having to constantly double-check their route through the thick, hilly woods.

Back into the Trollshaws

The Trollshaws are justly famed as an area not to travel through lightly. Not only are Trolls a frequent danger, the heavily forested hills are covered with sharp rocks and thick blankets of mouldering leaves, which are ever wet and prone to shifting beneath one's feet without warning.

- The company will spend five days through the Trollshaws on the trail of the bandit's Captain. Three days into the woods, they must pass their first Fatigue test (TN 16).



Hazard Suggestions

Should the companions succeed in triggering a Hazard episode even during such a short trek, the Loremaster may use the following suggestions to set up one or more specific accidents (see *The One Ring*, page 160).

Troll Trap (Look-out Man – Wound)

Trolls are famously dull-witted, but one or two seem to have picked up a new trick. The Look-out must make an **Awareness** test. Failure indicates the companion gets hauled into the air by a rope about the ankle as the hero stumbles into a Troll's snare trap. The companion loses Endurance, or is Wounded on an eye result.

Hailstorm (All Companions – Strain)

The canopy of interwoven tree branches above the Trollshaws is thick, even if not quite as oppressive as Mirkwood. There are many gaps through which sun, rain and wind pour through. Sometimes, too many. A sudden storm of heavy hail strikes, bombarding the company with pellets of ice the size of pigeon's eggs. All companions must roll **Travel**; on a failure, a hero loses Endurance equal to the roll of a Success die.

Into the Coldfells

Eight days into their journey, the company leaves the beeches and pines of the Trollshaws behind to see the vast windswept foothills of the Coldfells rising before them.

The Coldfells are highlands criss-crossed by deep crevasses and unexpected gorges, many holding tributaries to the river Hoarwell. Nimble sheep and agile goats bound between broken cairns and barrows along the peaks, long since overturned and despoiled by Trolls.

- 70 miles of travel across the hard terrain of the Coldfells leads the company to the broken keep in Part **Four – Deep Plans**. It takes them 7 days and another Fatigue test at TN16 to reach it.

Hazard Suggestions

The Coldfells are windswept and frequently dreary, but late spring sees small wild flowers covering the knolls, lending some much-needed colour to the long high hills, ever rising east towards the Misty Mountains. Much of the Coldfells appears to be the same as one traverses them and this can be a deadly illusion, for cracks and crevices appear without warning before an unwary traveller, potentially plunging them to their doom.

Unexpected Ravine (Guide – Fatigue)
A wide and unseen valley suddenly opens at the characters' feet, one with such steep sides that they cannot be easily traversed. The Guide has to make a **Travel** test to find a way around that will put the company back onto the trail. If the roll fails, the companion adds Fatigue again from climbing up and down the hillsides searching for a proper way around (add Fatigue twice on an).

Fell Hunters (Huntsman – Dangerous Meeting)
While hunting for game along a low ridge, one of the Huntsmen for the company notices the long grey body of a wolf lope away over a hill top. Fortunately, the Huntsman was downwind and went unnoticed... so far. The Huntsman must make a **Stealth** test to slip away without drawing

Hunting the Captain in the Coldfells

The shifting sides of the Coldfells' many hills require a Hunting or Search test to stay on the Captain's trail. While it has been about six days since Mormog passed this way, he has a heavy tread and travels with a decent-sized company. If the trail is successfully kept, a Riddle test can be made to sort through the various evidence left behind at a small camp. Success indicates that the "Ogre" passed that way with at least two other Trolls and several Men.

A great or extraordinary success on the Search or Hunting roll reveals that Mormog is followed by something else, but its tracks are utterly confusing: based on who examines them, they appear as the markings of a different creature, a Man, an Elf, an Orc, even a four-legged creature...

On a failure, the company exhaust themselves searching among the foothills before they finally discern the right trail: the heroes are considered temporarily Weary for as long as they remain in the Coldfells,

the wolf's attention. Failure brings a pack of hungry Wild Wolves down on the company equal to 4 + 1 for each player-hero.

- Part Four -
Deep Plans

Fifteen days after the company set out from Rivendell they descend into a gorge, climbing down a series of steps, hewn roughly on the side of one of its steep walls. They follow a gurgling stream at the bottom of the gorge as it slowly turns to the West, until they come in sight of a tall hill, towering above them to their left. On the top of the hill sit the ruined stump of an old keep and the remains of a long curtain wall of stone. These ruins don't look so different than others the characters have seen over the last five days in the Coldfells, with two notable exceptions: the tracks they are following lead right towards the hill and the ruins seem occupied. The tell-tale gleam of metal and motion gives the occupants of the outpost away from quite a distance, but it doesn't exactly look like they're trying to hide, either.

From the gorge, the companions can see that a trail climbs the steep side of the hill towards its summit. The roar of rushing waters tells them that the river Hoarwell must be close, somewhere to the north-west of the ruins.

The Broken Keep

The fortification is ancient beyond the reckoning of the Men of Eriador, yet there it stands, still partially intact. It was erected by the Men of Westernesse for a precise purpose, now lost to memory, but the Númenóreans built things to last and the fort outlasted the line of the kings that ordered its construction. Indeed, it was the hardiness of its foundations that prompted Captain Mormog to choose it for his grand plans.

From the outside, the fort looks just like many other ruins that rise from the broken terrain of the Coldfells. But, like a floating island of ice, what lies beneath the surface is far larger.

Mormog has expanded a series of existing underground passages and chambers, making room for large creatures like Trolls to come and go. Then, he brought Goblin slaves from Mount Gram for an ambitious undertaking, the excavation of a wide tunnel that will pass beneath the river Hoarwell: a subterranean road that one day will let entire armies enter unseen the lands to the West!

The Goblins have been digging Mormog's tunnel for years now, and have many long years of work before them still. But last year, the excavations brought to light something that was meant to be buried forever: an underground chamber, sealed with the markings of the kingdoms of Arnor (see **The Vault** box below).

The Vault

When Mormog was alerted to the discovery of the buried vault, he ordered the seals to be removed, and the stone door of the chamber was pried open. Inside the chamber Mormog found something completely unexpected: chained to a wall was a slave of Sauron, a corrupted spirit made flesh, buried alive and trapped centuries ago and left to languish in the dark. But what happened next was something even more surprising: the chained being kneeled before Mormog, promising to serve him with unswerving loyalty, should he break its fetters. The Captain ordered the thing to be freed, as the cunning Troll had read the runes graven into the thing's collar in Black Speech: spells of obeisance and submission.

It is a strange fate the one that has placed Feredrûn, the Hunter of the East, at the service of Mormog, a stroke of luck that the Captain is eager to exploit fully to further his own wicked ends (*see Part Five – Bargains in the Night*).

Captain Mormog and several of his more trusted warriors stayed at the fort for several days, inspecting how the works were proceeding there. Two days before the arrival of the company they left again heading north-east, towards the Ettendales. The adventurers are unlikely to discover this before they enter the ruins.

Once the company has learned enough to move on, they can attempt to follow Mormog. It isn't hard to pick up

the Captain's trail when they are certain of what they are seeking. There are tracks of several large creatures (no Men this time) headed to the north-east that are only two days old.

The Fort

The following descriptions present the layout of the structures above the ground, and those below (it might be worth noting that nothing suggests immediately that the keep sits upon an extensive complex of underground passages and chambers).

The Surface

The ruins rising above the hilltop are presently inhabited by six Men (use the Ruthless Bandits stats found at page 40). They are in charge of keeping watch on the surrounding countryside, and of catching some game to enrich with some fresh meat the soup served to everyone in the fort (there is a chance every day that two of them leave the fort to go hunting).

1. Curtain Wall: A long stone wall surrounds the top of the hill almost completely. Several gaps open along its length, and the side of the hilltop looking out towards the river Hoarwell is completely open (the height and steepness of the hillside didn't need further defense).

2. Broken Keep: Once rising almost forty feet above the already tall vantage afforded by the hill, the square tower has been greatly reduced in size. Whether it was the hand of time that gnawed at it, or fire and warfare, it is impossible to tell. There are generally two Bandits stationed on top of it on guard, keeping look-out on the surrounding lands. Most of the time, they are somewhat idle as they don't expect to see anything of interest.

a) Old Barracks: Several well-made chambers on the ground floor of the keep still serve their original purpose. Rough made cots sit in the corners of two of these rooms. The bandits that aren't on watch can either be found here, or in the Map Room.

b) Map Room: Located at the first floor of the keep, this room sports a beautiful mosaic floor. The stone tiles are still perfectly set so as to leave the surface flawlessly smooth. The mosaic shows a map of Arnor as it was, before the division into three kingdoms. The largest and most detailed element of the topographic depiction is the city of Annúminas, the ancient capital of that realm. The north-eastern portion of the map appears now cracked, as the roots of a sickly plant have pushed and fractured the mosaic tiles, making it look like a plague is creeping across the map from the north. It doesn't take a Lore-master to know that the cracks correspond to the witch-realm of Angmar. The room now houses a table and several rough chairs.

c) Armoury: Here is where the arms and armour for the outpost's garrison were originally kept. Now, it serves as a larder and storage room for assorted pieces of equipment, broken weapons and various other junk. There is a haunch or two of fresh venison here, among other meats and sundries.

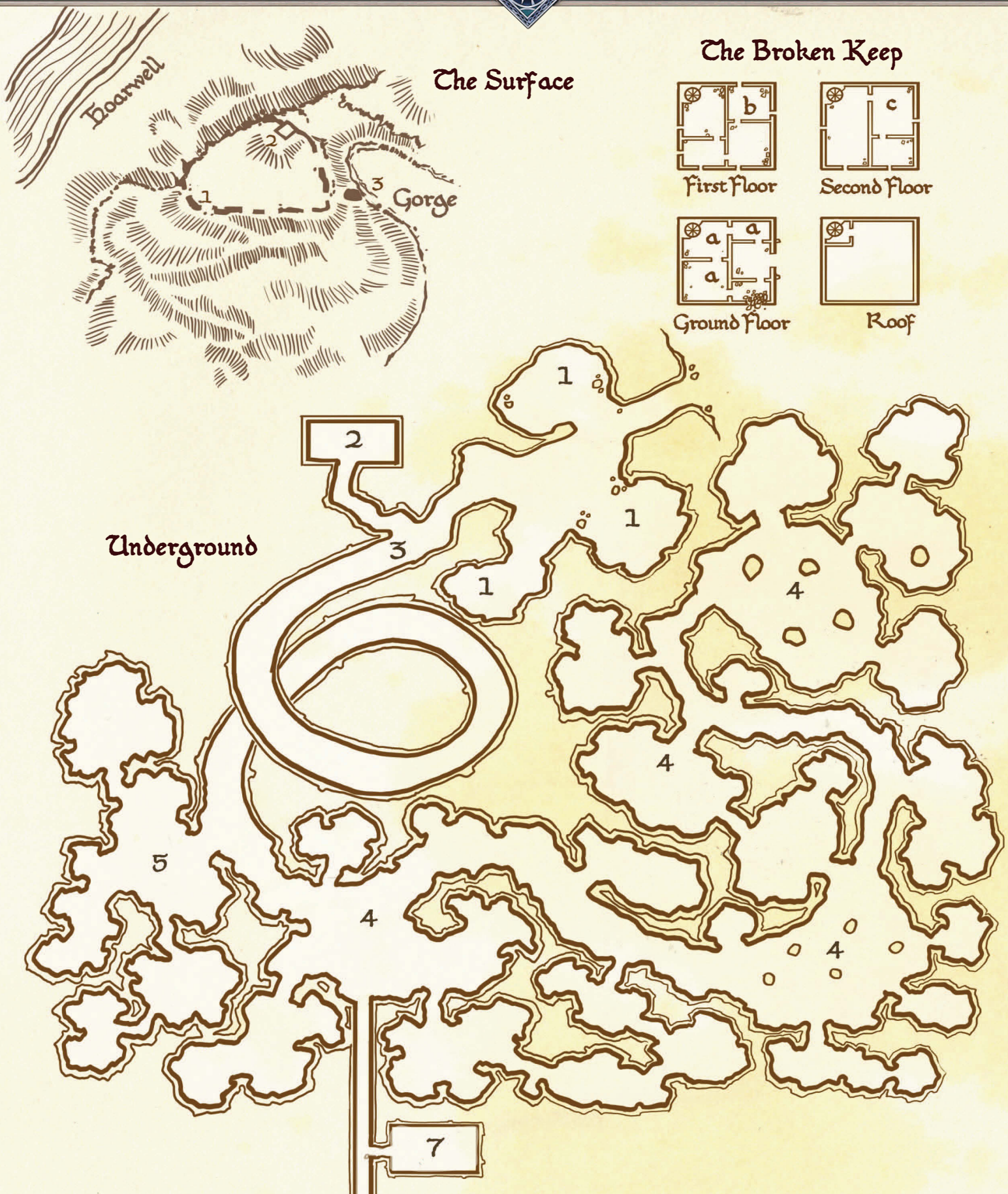
3. Cave Entrance: To the east of the keep, right below the curtain wall, a roughly expanded cavern entrance leads to the chambers below ground. This opening isn't difficult to reach, but someone who gets attacked by surprise while approaching it risks falling into the gorge below.

Underground

In the caves and underground chambers dug in the hill below the fort live Bron and Pell, two Stone-trolls, and Gorzim, an especially mean Hill-troll. Deeper underground, fifty or so Goblin slaves can be met in the various locales, digging the tunnel or going about on other errands. The slaves are kept in line by a band of three cruel Orcs slave-drivers, carrying whips in addition to their usual war gear (use the statistics for Orcs of Mount Gram, from *Rivendell*, page 73).

1. Troll Caves: Not part of the original building are a series of caves that have been hacked out of the hillside, providing room for approximately seven Trolls, if they squeezed in tight. During the day, Bron and Pell can usually be found here, dozing. Occasionally, they get up and go looking for something to eat down below in the Goblin Pits.

2. Treasury: This is a narrow, rectangular room, probably an old cellar. An exquisite fresco covers the far wall. It depicts a city built from white stone, with many elaborate


The Surface
Boarwell
1
2
3
Gorge
The Broken Keep
b
First Floor
c
Second Floor
a
a
a
Ground Floor
Roof
Underground
1
2
3
1
1
4
4
5
4
4
7

columns, and a large white tree. While still beautiful, part of the fresco has been defaced when a Troll cave was dug through it. Gorzim makes his home here in the treasury of Captain Mormog and his men. Gems twinkle from the floor amidst clay pots spilling silver, which sit beside small chests filled with gold, surrounded by arms and armour, some of them potentially centuries old. The room holds a hoard containing Treasure 120**, the loot of many years of scouring the ruins and tombs of ancient Rhudaur. There is no way to get to the treasure without alerting Gorzim.

3. Entrance to the Tunnel: Beyond the Troll caves is a long tunnel leading downwards in a big slow spiral to the beginning of the Goblin Pits below.

4. Goblin Pits: A large series of caves, some natural, some expanded upon, with enough room to house the Goblin slaves. A large meat pantry is nearby.

5. Tool 'Shed': A large storage pit where various digging tools are kept. Everything from picks and mattocks to large kegs of awful ale, beer and other spirits, mixed with other liquids of dubious provenance. The bones of dozens of Goblins line the bottom of the pit. Mormog and the Orc slave-drivers know how to make the Goblins work hard, and the Trolls grow too hungry sometimes...

6. The Tunnel: Here begins the long tunnel that will pass beneath the river Hoarwell. A character possessing the *Stone-craft* Trait can tell at a glance that the shaft is at least ten years or so in the making, with years to go before completion.

7. The Vault: A short side passage from the main excavation of the tunnel leads to where the vault was accidentally discovered. The large door of stone lies on the ground, among the remains of the brass seals removed by Mormog. If the companions inspect the door and seals, they recognise the stone-craft as Númenórean, and the seals as bearing the symbols of Arnor; this clearly marks the vault as something built in the Second Age! Inside, the vault is empty and bare, its surfaces smooth and blank, devoid of any signs of wear or other marks, with the exception of the wall facing the opening: there, a heavy chain of iron hangs from a ring set into the wall; the last ring on the other end of the chain has been broken, as if something was fastened to it but was set loose. The darkness here seems to be thick as a cold vapour, and every companion entering the chamber must pass a Corruption test (TN16) or gain a point of Shadow.

Entering the Ruins

The company needs information, as Captain Mormog hasn't left any useful paper trail or other obvious clues; however, while the occupants of the fort are not privy to all the Captain's plans, they all know that he has left and where he is headed.

The companions have time to consider how to enter the broken fort, but there seem to be two main ways into the ruins: through one of the gaps in the curtain wall to reach the keep, or going directly underground, once discovered that there is a cave entrance dug into the side of the hill.

Unless the companions want to be spotted immediately by the bandits standing watch on the keep, they will want to avoid taking the path climbing to the top of the hill. Climbing the steep hillside from the bottom of the gorge requires an **Athletics** test (TN 16). On a success, the companions reach the curtain wall, and can enter the ruins through one of the gaps opening along it.

"We're the New Guys"

Clever (or foolish!) companions may try to enter the fort taking the place of some of the bandits, or posing as new arrivals. This has a chance of working spectacularly well, as new faces arrive occasionally at the keep: Mormog is always looking to reinforce his forces, and has been welcoming all sorts.

It takes at least a **Persuade** roll to convince any of the Trolls, or the Orcs below, that the characters are supposed to be here, asking whatever questions they may be asking. Characters who supply Bron or Pell with ale, or any of the Goblins with food, are automatically cheerfully accepted and swiftly brought into conversation about the latest doings; everybody is bored, so news from a newcomer is welcome. A failed roll means that everybody clams up and says they've got to work. On an they ask about the newcomer as soon as they get a chance, setting off a search.

Gorzim is not so easily fooled, requiring a roll with TN 16, unless a character's thinks to say, "Captain's orders" or any variation thereof, in which case they automatically succeed. Anyone failing to convince Gorzim leads to him checking immediately with the other bandits to see who the new face is...

Attacking the Guards

Entering the ruins and attacking the Bandits on guard duty on the top of the keep is a fairly straightforward endeavour; taking them down before they can sound the large bell they've got will be hard. The bandits really don't expect to be attacked – they are, after all, in the middle of nowhere – so, all Target Numbers for preliminary rolls and surprise attacks are reduced by one level (-2). Once attacked, they will immediately try to sound the bell. If they are given enough time (two rounds), they will succeed, and the other four bandits will show up.

A fight will in any case make enough noise that Bron and Pell will be alerted (but they won't come into the sun). Gorzim on the other hand might choose to intervene: player-heroes approaching the fort during the day and assuming that all the Trolls in the fort are Stone-trolls will be in for a big surprise when he charges out of the cave entrance and attempts to smash them flat. The Orcs and Goblins down below can hear nothing of what is going on above and vice-versa, unless the alarm is sounded. It would never occur to any of the Trolls to ask for help, but if the Bandits get overwhelmed and any of them manage to escape, they may well run down to the mines and the Orc slave-drivers from Gundabad will drop their whips and unsheathe their curved swords.

Dealing with the Trolls

Bron and Pell do not like be awoken during the day and are sluggish if attacked (they automatically lose initiative). They are also quite chatty if bribed with ale. They don't know exactly what Mormog is up to but, *"Oh, aye, the Cap'n's a tricky one, don' yer know. Wants to 'ave a bit of a chat wit' ta other lads, doesn't he?"*

Gorzim is a Hill-troll (see *The One Ring* page 244). He is far more suspicious than the Stone-trolls and generally far more dangerous, too. His main priority, before all others, is to protect the treasury, like the Captain told him to.

Sneaking Around

As long as the alarm is not sounded, it takes one or more **Stealth** rolls to move about the fort unnoticed. The difficulty of any roll is generally lowered to TN 12, as the roar of the Hoarwell is very loud here.

Characters successfully skulking about get to make an **Awareness** test to hear the following bits of information. A great success yields two pieces of information and an extraordinary roll gives three:

- Captain Mormog has big plans for this region of Eriador.
- Bron and Pell are Stone-trolls who love ale. They are asleep in one of the caves.
- The Captain is heading into the Ettendales.
- Something occasionally travels with the Captain, and its presence creeps out everyone.
- Gorzim is a Hill-troll and it's best not to cheek him in the slightest, but he near worships the Captain.

A character with the *Shadow-lore* Trait knows that "Mormog" in the Black Speech means "Black Voice" but it tells them little else.

- Part Five -
Bargains in the Night

The first evening the companions make camp after they have left the fort behind, they encounter the thing that Mormog freed from the buried vault under the broken keep. It is a disloyal agent of Sauron, a hunting spirit from beyond the Circles of the World (see **The Hunter of the East** box overleaf).

The creature chooses to approach the adventurers when the night is well underway. The companion who is set on watch notices a deepening of the darkness around the encampment, as if a cloud was covering the light of the stars and moon, yet the night sky is very clear. Then, a voice comes out of the still night, addressing the companion on guard:

"Greetings. Perhaps you should wake your companions and we can talk." The creature waits in the shadows while the character complies. A company with a fire, or lighting

a torch to see better, who asks the voice to "come into the light" or some variation thereof will receive a reply of, "When you are all ready."

When the company expresses a general willingness to meet with the unknown visitor, the darkness seem to recede, and Feredrûn walks into view. Her appearance is that of a young woman clad in glittering raiment, her hair lying on her shoulders as pale in the moonlight as polished silver. Her beauty seems unmeasurable in mortal terms, and any Elf laying eyes on her realises she does not belong to the race of Men, nor to that of the Firstborn. The only blemish marring such a vision is the heavy collar of iron she wears around her neck. Fiery runes glitter along its surface.

The apparition surveys the company, her dark, cold eyes looking at each of them for several long moments. Then she speaks:

"I have been called with many names since I entered Arda, many long years ago, but here in the West I am called Feredrûn. I think you may be the ones I've been searching for."

The Encounter

To be in the presence of Feredrûn is like standing in the middle of a great cave, or at the opening of a deep valley – all sounds seem remote and near at the same time, as if they were echoes carried by the wind. Her otherworldness, and her power, is plain for anyone to perceive.

Hopefully, the companions address the creature peacefully: all players are allowed to make a roll of **Insight** to gain bonus Success dice for the encounter, but do so with a difficulty equal to TN 20 (see Preliminary Rolls on page 151 of *The One Ring*).

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the Encounter with Feredrûn by keeping track of how many successes the player-heroes achieve during the Introduction and Interaction stages (see *The One Ring*, page 189) and by comparing the total to the entries at the end of this section.

The Hunter of the East

The creature's name is Feredrûn, the "Hunter of the East", and was once a huntress of the host of Oromë. The Dark Lord invited her centuries ago to return to Middle-earth and assume a physical form, seducing her with lies and promises. Then, Sauron bound her to his will by setting about her neck an iron collar, inscribed with powerful sorceries of obeisance and submission; thus spell-enslaved, Feredrûn could not choose but submit to the will of any loyal servant of Sauron.

According to the Dark Lord's plans, Feredrûn was first sent to spy and waylay the enemies of Sauron, and then to hunt for the Rings of Power created by the Elves of Eregion and that Sauron greatly desired. For many years, the incarnated spirit carried out the orders of his Master, until the Dark Lord himself was defeated in the War of the Last Alliance.

When the Ruling Ring was cut from Sauron's hand, Feredrûn wandered witless and purposeless for a while. Then, she was encountered and captured in Eriador by a lieutenant of Isildur, as he was making his way home after the long siege in the Black Land. Unable to defeat or banish her, the Númenórean lieutenant resolved to imprison the powerful spirit, and ordered the construction of a secret vault, dug deep under the foundations of a watchtower.

In the following centuries, the power of Arnor waned. After the death of its tenth king the realm was divided in three kingdoms, and the purpose of the keep and the vault it guarded was lost. Deep under the earth, Feredrûn slumbered uneasily, of a sleep that lasted centuries. She awakened from it only a few years ago, when the discovery of the One Ring stirred her conscience.

Today, the Hunter of the East is free from the chains that confined her underground, but she is once again spell-bound to a servitor of her Master, Captain Mormog. After so many years of slavery, what Feredrûn desires beyond all other things is to leave Middle-earth...

Set Tolerance

Feredrûn has no patience for Wisdom, as in her experiences it is too easily replaced by guile. As a consequence, the Encounter's initial Tolerance is equal to the highest Valour in the group. Increase the Tolerance of the encounter if there are any Elves in the company, as Feredrûn believes members of their race have the best chance of helping her, and subtract one if there are Rangers, as she was once imprisoned by the Men of the West.

Introduction

For the same reasons presented above, Feredrûn favours a plain speech over fair or crooked words. If anyone presents himself using **Awe** and succeeds, consider the roll to have achieved an additional success for the purposes of determining the outcome of the encounter. Conversely, any success obtained rolling **Riddle** or **Courtesy** does not count towards that total at all. If anyone dares to present himself using **Song**, the company is in for a surprise. Any song, poem or music successfully played by the company at this stage seems to mesmerise Feredrûn, as she is briefly recalled of a time when she danced before the Valar upon the green grass of Valinor: add twice any success obtained rolling **Song** to the total of the encounter.

Interaction

Feredrûn may pass on the following information about herself to the players as the interaction stage progresses:

"I am an unwilling servant of the Shadow. The body you see before you is my prison, cast in flesh and bone. Once I roamed free in the void between songs, unclad and formless. The Dark Lord called me out of the Night, lulling me with honeyed words. He promised me new experiences, such as I could not dream of, in exchange for a simple task, and then I could return to the void if I wished it...

"Truly he is named the Deceiver. When I came into the world and kneeled before him, Sauron placed this collar around my neck, binding me to his will and that of his servants. He sent me to hunt for his enemies, and later to search for the Rings of Power. I obeyed, unable to oppose his will.

"I have laboured long on his quests and I have grown weary of this shackled body. Now I long only to leave the circles of this world, to return whence I came. But the spells that Sauron laid on this collar are still too powerful for me to break by my strength alone, and here I am after all these years, still leashed to yet another minion of the Dark Lord who imprisoned me.

"But maybe the time has come... My current master is the one you are seeking, Mormog. Do you wish to find him, and, perhaps, thwart his plans? You cannot tarry, for some of them, at least, are reaching fruition. I can help you, but only if you promise to set me free."

While the players will certainly recognise the various subjects that she refers to in her speech, several of the things that Feredrûn mentions would only be known to the Wise and characters with appropriate Traits. But the gist of what she wants is clear to anyone listening to her words.

Feredrûn knows that the companions are searching for Mormog; bound by her collar, she cannot openly betray her master, but she can choose not to oppose the adventurers. She will do so if the heroes can convince her that they can help her leave Middle-earth once and for all. The huntress knows that no one in the company has the power to break her collar or otherwise set her free, but the heroes may suggest that they know someone who might be able to help (a patron like Elrond, or Gandalf the Grey, or wise Saruman...).

Many Questions

These are the answers that Feredrûn gives before a bargain is struck, if she is posed the right questions:

How can we help you?
"My shackles are too strong for you to break, but I know that there is a place of lore hidden somewhere west of the mountains where someone who might know how to set me free resides. Even if I knew where it was, access to it would be forbidden to me. But perhaps you may enter it, or may find your way to it."

What can you offer us in return?
"I know where Mormog is headed and some of his plans. I know how to help you avoid his guards, help you are going to need, for the way will be perilous."

How can we trust you?
"Consider this: what would I gain by deceiving you? Surely Mormog would reward me if I reported your presence. Even if you do not believe me, would you not still seek him? Or would you have me believe it mere coincidence that you have followed his trail so far?"

If the company refuses Feredrûn's bargain, she shakes her head in a sad gesture.

"So be it. I will not report you to Mormog. You may yet change your minds when you see what lies ahead... I will visit you again before this is finished."

Then, the huntress retreats into the darkness, as the sounds of the night return to fill the space left vacant by her leave. Will she keep her word, or she is off to tell Captain Mormog all about them?

If the companions are willing to strike a pact with Feredrûn, the Loremaster may gauge the achievement of the company and the trust they earned by comparing the number of successful rolls the heroes obtained along the encounter with the entries below (applying the modifiers listed in the Introduction paragraph). Then, she leaves, leaving no trace of her having ever manifested.

1: Feredrûn suspects her days of waiting for heroes to help aren't over yet. She keeps her answers to a minimum and may be willing to sell the characters out to Mormog, as she doubts they have any chance of freeing her.

2-4: Feredrûn sees an opportunity, but she has been tricked far too many times to trust the companions too openly. She provides a selection of the information presented below, including what is contained in a maximum of two entries (the Loremaster chooses, based on the questions of the heroes).

5-6: Feredrûn's hunger for freedom is stirred, and she answers to most of the company's questions, explaining or expanding on its answers when she can. The information given to the players should include at least four entries among those listed below, as above based on the questions made by the companions.

7+: Feredrûn is truly hopeful for the first time in centuries, and puts her trust in the companions. She provides all the information asked of her, making sure to include what is contained in the Concerning Trolls entry opposite.

What Feredrûn Knows

Who is Captain Mormog?
"Mormog is a fearsome monster, larger than the largest of Orc-kind but agile and cunning as the cleverest among

them. He is evil and fierce as the meanest Mountain-troll, and able to endure the light of the sun. He is the first of his kind to have come to the North, the member of a fell race no doubt bred by Sauron himself."

Why is he called "Captain"?
"It is his rank in the armies of the Black Land. He commands many dark-hearted minions: Trolls, Orcs and Evil Men."

Why are you with Captain Mormog?
"Mormog freed me from my underground prison, and I had no choice but bend my will to the spells engraved on my collar. I am to assist him as needed with his plans."

Where is he headed?
"Just beyond the borders of the Coldfells lie the Ettendales. Near the headwaters of the river Hoarwell there is a deep forested ravine, which opens into a wide valley floor. That narrow dale was once known as the Broadcleave, but no one today remembers it. Mormog has summoned there a gathering of the Troll-kindreds, and he will attend to give a speech."

What is his speech about?
"I don't know. Mormog tells me little. If you hurry, you should manage to arrive before the night on which he intends to speak."

Concerning Trolls

Feredrûn explains that Trolls have, in general, very poor eyesight, especially during the day (for those that don't turn into stone); however, nearly all of them have an excellent sense of smell. As the huntress explains, the characters must cover their scent to avoid being discovered too soon by their 'quarry'. If the heroes have gained her full trust (7 successes or more), Feredrûn lays a spell upon the company, reducing the TN of any **Stealth** test by two levels (-4) for a week.

- Part Six -
Into the Ettendales

After leaving the fort behind, the company travels north for a time, but soon swings more and more directly east, the river Hoarwell running to their left towards the Misty Mountains. The broken land and crevasses of the Coldfells give way to the broad, open valleys between the high hills of the Ettenmoors. This panorama is frequently difficult to see, though, as a heavy fog regularly obscures the company's vision. Countless streams flow past, tributaries to the river in its rocky bed.

What if the Companions Attack Feredrûn?

Feredrûn is a hunting spirit clad in a physical body. She can suffer pain and weariness, but because of the original nobility of her spirit she does not age and cannot be slain. Moreover, her nature has endowed her physical form with many virtues: she can enshroud herself in a supernatural darkness to hide from her enemies, and she can travel long distances in the pursuit of her quarry, being able to move at night as far as the flight of a fast bird. Should the companions try to attack her, or otherwise harm her, she will simply leave their presence, retreating into her darkness.

- The company travels for 40 miles to the headwaters of the southern branch of the Hoarwell. This leg of the journey takes six days to complete, and a single Fatigue check made against TN 18 (the Ettenmoors are a land lost to Shadow).

The closer the company comes to the headwaters of the southernmost branch of the Hoarwell, the harsher the terrain. The highlands are all hard stone and sharp falls, surrounded by deep valleys whose bottoms are nearly always bogs filled with sucking black mud. The fog is even thicker and more perpetual than it was in the dales. Even where it isn't completely sodden, the ground is thick and spongy with peat. Water collects into pools which run off downwards and west to feed the river.

Hazard Suggestions

The Loremaster may use the following suggestions to set up one or more specific Hazard episodes (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game,* page 160).

Struggling through Mud (All Companions – Fatigue)
The company does not seem able to find its way out of a deep fog-bank, and is struggling across one of the many boggy areas between the hills. All characters must make a **Travel** test or add Fatigue again as they struggle against the sucking mud (add Fatigue twice on an).

Down from the Mountains (Look-out – Dangerous Meeting)
Stomping slowly over the highlands comes a Mountain-troll, slowly working his way towards the Broadcleave. See page 245 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* for the stats. The Look-out must make an **Awareness** test to notice him coming in time to give adequate warning, otherwise the Troll sniffs the companions and attacks them by surprise.

If the heroes are under Feredrûn's spell of concealment, the Troll does not see them (unless they attack him, of course!).

To the Broadcleave

Beyond the headwaters of the Hoarwell there lies an ancient path cleaved out of the stones. Along the path, there are steps deeper and wider than the stride of any Troll. Many of the steps are long broken, or have been hacked away in turn, to allow for the passage of smaller beings. The path eventually leads down into a cavernous, forested ravine, which resembles nothing so much as an axe-strike deep into the base of the mountainside.

At the bottom of the ravine, the floor of the dale is wider, and filled with grass and pine trees of such a dark green hue that the valley is almost uniformly black. The ravine ends against a massive, smooth, sheer rock-face that echoes and greatly increases all sounds.

The company arrives in sight of the place where the path starts descending into the Broadcleave at about mid-afternoon and easily finds a place among the forested hills to gaze, unnoticed, at what is going on at the entrance of the dale...

An Unhappy Hour

In front of the entrance to the ravine stand barrels, and barrels and barrels... so many, in fact, that the companions spot them long before they see the actual entrance to the Broadcleave. There are big barrels, small barrels, casks, kegs, butts, drums, pipes, kilderkins, and hogsheads, and a great variety of large drinking vessels, like jugs, horns, tankards, canteens, even waterskins, pitchers and flagons.

Before the huge stacks of containers and drinking implements are three massive Hill-trolls. They are busy arranging the materials for transportation, following the peremptory directions of a brute of size comparable to theirs, but clad in black mail from bony head to clawed foot. The fearsome creature stands erect, making it look more like a gigantic Orc than a Troll; a huge sword with a curved and jagged blade is strapped across its wide back. The echoes of its harsh voice clearly reach the player-heroes where they are hiding, and sends shudders up their spines.

Even at a great distance, the company can feel the shadow of fear touch their hearts at even the thought of confronting such a monster: this must undoubtedly be the target of their quest, Captain Mormog. Not long after the arrival of the companions, Mormog leaves the three Hill-trolls to their business, and descends into the Broadcleave.

The Hunter Returns

If the company made a bargain with Feredrûn, she finds them unerringly. She walks to them as the twilight approaches, out of a swirling fog. She seems wearier than before, with black bruises around her neck, where the iron collar sits: Mormog thought she was too late to arrive at their latest meeting, and so he gave her a lesson in obedience. As they ponder how to enter the valley, Feredrûn says:

"You have finally seen my current gaoler. Already, the Trolls gather at his call. The ones intelligent enough to heed such a request, at least. Once the sun sets, many more will come to hear him speak. You won't have problems understanding what he says: Mormog has been taught to speak by his Dark Master and favours the Black Speech, but few other Trolls speak it, so he will address them in the Common Tongue tonight. Since you've come this far, you should hear what he has to say. To do so, you will have to enter the Broadcleave."

Feredrûn believes the company's best chance is to wait until the Trolls have started drinking, when the Sun sets. The barrels contain beer, wine and other liquors, and that will dull the Trolls' senses. Alternatively, they might try to pass while the Sun is still up, but they will have to slip past the three Hill-trolls, plus any other Troll that happens to arrive in the meantime. The ravine sides leading down to the Broadcleave are far too steep to even attempt climbing. Eventually, Feredrûn takes its leave of the company.

Our Hope is in Secrecy

The company's practical choices are to either slip forward to hide within the Broadcleave during the day or wait until after nightfall, when the Trolls have already gathered.

By Daylight

The company decides that their best bet is to slip into the Broadcleave by day. Approaching the entrance to the dale requires a **Stealth** test (TN 18; characters under Feredrûn's spell roll against TN 14). A hero who obtained a great success on his roll can assist another character who failed his own roll, or two characters on an extraordinary success. An assisted hero is considered to have succeeded in his own **Stealth** roll.

A companion who fails his roll and is not helped by another hero can make an **Awareness** test to dive for cover before he is spotted by the Hill-troll guards. If the roll succeeds, the companion can wait until the rest of the company has passed, and then try once more a **Stealth** test. If the second roll fails, the hero is separated from the company, or he is spotted by the Trolls (player's choice).

The companions who pass unnoticed descend the path into the Broadcleave. At the bottom of the valley they find that they may easily find a place to hide in the small but thick groves of pines on either side of the dale. Hiding is highly recommended: there are already several Hill-trolls and one or two huge Mountain-trolls down in the valley, waiting and attending to Mormog's commands...

By Moonlight

If the company decides to wait until nightfall, soon after twilight they see dozens of torches approaching from the north and east. A veritable army of Stone-trolls, accompanied by several Mountain-trolls and a few more Hill-trolls walk out of the darkness, and soon help themselves to the barrels and drinking vessels passed over by Mormog's guards.

A good fifty or more Trolls of various sizes and breeds wander past the company, down into the Broadcleave, many of them carrying the barrels and already drinking as they go. The noise is nearly deafening, the Trolls' heavy voices booming and reverberating off the stones of the mountains. When the bulk have passed by, the three Hill-trolls head down into the valley as well, leaving what looks to be a strange looking pile of mossy stones at the entrance to the Broadcleave. As the guards leave, to the company's astonishment, the stones move, features slowly emerging. A gigantic, two-headed Ettin now guards the entry!

Anyone in the company easily realises that it will be very difficult to slip past the Ettin without a fight. Fortunately, there is one distinct advantage: the raucous drinking and shouting of the Trolls down in the Broadcleave means that no one will hear the Ettin roar for help.

If the company tries to ambush the Ettin, see the section on *Two-Headed* for the penalties they have to overcome. Once the Ettin is toppled, the companions may enter the Broadcleave.

Ettin Guardian:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
76	7
Parry	Armour
6	3d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 1
Movement, 0	Custom, 0
Perception, 3	Vocation, 0
Weapon Skills	
Crush	3
Tear	2
Special Abilities	
Great Size	Seize Victim
Horrible Strength	Two-headed*

*Two-headed Ettins are much harder to catch unawares. Whenever a hero attempts to ambush it must roll their Feat die twice on their **Battle**, **Hunting** or **Stealth** test, taking the lower of the two rolls. In addition, all **Stealth** tests made to slip past an Ettin unaware are increased by +2 TN.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Crush	Attribute Level		12	-
Tear	Attribute Level		16	-

Captain Mormog's Speech

The Broadcleave's valley floor is filled from side-to-side with heartily drinking Trolls of nearly every kind (there are no Cave-trolls). A massive bonfire blazes away at the centre of the dale and the smell of roasting meat fills the night air.

A few hours into the night, the thunderous noise of the Trolls drops audibly, as the black-clad figure of Captain Mormog climbs up onto a large stone set before the sheer rock wall at the end of the valley. Mormog's terrible, grim voice carries to every corner of the Broadcleave and the company members know they will hear it again in their nightmares until the end of their days.

"Brothers, Sisters, yer have et and yer have drank hearty, eh? Now harken here. Yer knows from where I came. Yer knows who I serve. Long time since last he walked here in the North, but here ever his heart flies and with good reason. Here are soldiers he favours afore all others. Here is the strength of his armies of old! Know this you lot, he's coming back, he is.

"Weak are the west-lands, gone soft with age. They haven't known strife in a thousand years! Yet yer sit in the mountains and grind rock for yer bread. Listen: we have many friends in these lands now, men what's useful for more than their flesh. Men to serve yer, keep a sharp eye out while yer sleep. I've been busy, yer see. Digging places, caves and such, set all about Eriador. Secret places where the light of the sun will never touch yer, until by the Dark Lord's will, the sun will come out no more 'round here."

"Time's soon coming to leave these highlands and take back what was yers long afore. Join up with me and yer will never want for meat, nor drink. Join with us, and yer'll have plunder the likes of which have not been seen in an age!"

Many Trolls throughout the Broadcleave pick up the chant of "Mormog!" others yell, "Angmar!"

We Can Take 'im!

It is possible that some player-heroes may insist on trying to fight Captain Mormog directly. Remind them of their mission, and how getting themselves killed is not what Elrond meant when he entrusted them with the quest.

It goes without saying that the companions must find a way to confront Mormog away from his assembled Troll-army, unless the heroes are planning to leave the game messily and before their time. To make matters worse, Mormog is always accompanied by three bodyguards, two Hill-trolls and a Hill-troll Chief (see page 244 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*).

Captain Mormog

Trolls they were, but filled with the evil will of their master: a fell race, strong, agile, fierce and cunning, but harder than stone.

Mormog is a member of a new troll-race, bred by Sauron himself in recent years, in preparation for his great war. They are called Olog-hai in the Black Speech, and are stronger and faster than most of the older races.

Mormog:

Attribute Level	
9	
Endurance	Hate
95	10
Parry	Armour
7	3d
Skills	
Personality, 4	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 2
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Notched Sword (2h)	3
Claw	3
Special Abilities	
Fearsome*	Great Size
Hideous Toughness	Horrible Strength
Snake-like Speed	-

*Mormog's voice and the words he utters in the Black Speech are so terrifying that he gains the *Fearsome* ability. At the beginning of each combat round, he may spend 1 point of Hate to activate it. When the ability is active, Mormog may be attacked only by companions who pass a Valour test at TN 19 (*Fearsome* is an ability for powerful adversaries first introduced in the *Rivendell* supplement).

Weapons:

Weapon Type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Notched Sword	8		16	Pierce
Claw	6		12	Disarm

Notes

Notched Sword : Mormog's two-handed sword has a heavy blade of iron, capable to cut right through an armoured opponent.
Claw: The Captain will occasionally claw at his enemies, to rip their weapons out of their hands.

Slipping Away

If the companions have penetrated the Broadcleave and heard about the plans of Mormog, they have probably

accomplished everything that was in their power to achieve. Now it is time to leave, possibly saving their skin.

The ease with which the company flees depends on the choices they have made so far. If they sneaked into the Broadcleave during the day, they will have an Ettin to sneak past again or deal with on the way out. If they ended up killing the Ettin at any point they might have it easier, but within an hour or so from the end of Mormog's speech, one of his Hill-troll guards discover traces of the fight while hauling more drink down into the dale...

If the company manages to completely avoid detection, leaving no obvious traces of their presence, they are not pursued out of the Ettenmoors.

The Search

If Mormog suspects spies or sniffs trouble for any reason, he sends out a hunting party to see what is going on. The band consists of a Hill-troll Chief and two Hill-trolls (see page 244 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*). The company is fortunate in that so many Trolls have trampled the valley floor that it is difficult to track their flight and if they manage to reach the river Hoarwell proper, they can disappear by following the riverbed for a while.

The Loremaster may handle the flight of the company as a prolonged action, requiring 8 successes using **Hunting**, **Travel** or **Stealth** to be completed (see page 149 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*). The difficulty of the rolls may be set between TN 14 and TN 20, based on the circumstances. Each failed roll gains the hero a point of Fatigue.

If the companions reach the requisite number of successes before they roll a total of three icons (one for each Troll pursuer!), they pass the headwaters of the Hoarwell, slipping out of the Ettenmoors into the Ettendales, and leave their Troll pursuers far behind. If they fail, the hunting party catches them before they can reach the river. If the company manages to kill the Chief, the other two will flee.

One or more company members might choose to make a last stand, telling the rest to run. If this occurs, those who flee automatically escape. Resolve the combat normally; those who fight may yet triumph!

Bound by Honour

If the company made a bargain with Feredrûn, she approaches them at twilight in the Ettendales, two days after they left the Broadcleave behind. There and then, she will remind the companions of their given word, and wait for what instructions they will impart her.

The Shadow Is Not Lightly Denied

The adventure as written does not offer a way to free Feredrûn of her sorcerous shackles. We have chosen not to provide a solution here, to leave the Loremaster free to engineer the story into his own campaign in the way he sees best. The denouement of the plot can be as simple as promising Feredrûn to talk to Gandalf about it, but it may be worth the while of the Loremaster to significantly up the odds, and fill out the story further.

Mormog might possess a key capable to unlock the collar binding Feredrûn, an artefact given him by the no less than the Witch-king of Angmar. Or maybe one of the Wise, such as Saruman or Elrond, must be consulted. The vaults under Rivendell are said to contain objects dating back to previous ages of the world...

If the Loremaster chooses to expand Feredrûn's story, a special award should be offered to the company at the end of it. For example, forever after helping Feredrûn, when under a night sky, each character can choose to roll the Feat die twice once a night and choose the best result, to represent the lucky star that from that day seems to always shine on their path...

- Epilogue -
The Black Voice

Escaping from the Ettenmoors with the knowledge they sought brings the adventure to an end. When they finally return to Rivendell, Elrond is concerned by the company's tidings and immediately sends word to the Dúnedain about the Captain's plans for Eriador. The implications of what Mormog said and the long-term plans hinted at are even more worrisome. Captain Mormog is a villain that the company may indeed have to directly face one day, for he is one of the Shadow's chief agents in the North and a threat to all of Eriador...

Concerning - Archers -

- **When:** The company could undertake this quest in any spring or summer between 2946 and 2977.
- **Where:** This adventure begins in Rivendell and may lead the company to travel to where Fornost, the city of the Kings, once stood.
- **What:** The characters are asked to travel to the ruins of Fornost and search for evidence that Hobbits participated in a great battle, despite the lack of historical records.
- **Why:** Bilbo Baggins is visiting Rivendell and after a disagreement with another scholar over the Archers of Fornost, he endeavours to settle the matter once and for all.
- **Who:** Gishak Gashnaga, an Orc Chieftain from Mount Gram, is digging his underground realm under the North Downs.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into five parts, from the initial encounter in Rivendell to the climactic confrontation with an unpredicted threat.

Part One - Riddles in Rivendell

This episode may be presented to the companions at any time they are visiting Rivendell. The company is drawn into a scholarly debate between Bilbo Baggins and Lindir. Bilbo asks the heroes to journey to the ruins of Fornost to settle the matter once and for all.

Part Two - The Dead and the Lost

In Fornost, the company begins their search for signs of the legendary Hobbit archers. But the land has been long under the taint of shadow, and the companions may find that the past does not always rest easily.

Part Three - Into Darkness

The company investigate the Hall of Eärendur, where they encounter dangerous and spectral relics from the past.

Part Four - The Last Battle of the Green Company

The company is attacked by Gishak, the new ruler underground Fornost. But the companions are not alone, and with the aid of Rufus Took and the Green Company they can win the day.

Epilogue - Bringers of Tidings

The company can choose to lay Rufus and his company to rest, and to bring what clues and tidings they found in their adventure to Rivendell.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in the *Rivendell* supplement, any revelation episodes during this adventure are likely to revolve around the threat posed by the Orc war-band hiding under the ruins of Fornost Erain. Suggested revelation episodes include Reckless Hate, Deadly Strife or We Come to Kill.

- Part One - Riddles in Rivendell

The company has taken refuge in the house of Elrond. Perhaps they are resting here by the leave of Lord Elrond following the events of the previous adventure, or taking stock of their provisions as they cross from the first time from Wilderland into the western lands, or any other number of other reasons.

The Hidden Valley is a place of timeless peace and the companions find themselves able to engage in all manner of activity while resting, be it the study of books of lore, enjoying the many songs woven by Elvish minstrels, or simply taking a simple and comfortable nap. Indeed, it is the height of the season here and it is as though Rivendell and the very trees of the valley are as one, for even when no songs are played in its halls a warm wind carries music to all present.

A Conversation Among Friends

As the company walks past the great Hall of Fire they hear raised voices. Like most days, the hall itself sits empty, save for two individuals at the far end. To their surprise they are not both Elves. A Hobbit of the Shire is visiting the Hidden Valley and has engaged himself in quite the debate.

"Though Elves may be wise, they do not know all that has happened in Middle-earth," protests a Hobbit from a distant corner of the Hall of Fire. Drawn by the raised voices the companions see a small figure planted atop a stool near the crackling flames of a great hearth carved into delicately etched stone walls. He wears a fine crimson waistcoat and a long-stemmed pipe is clenched between his teeth, plumes of white smoke rising to the ceiling above. In odd contrast to his fine wardrobe a patched green cloak rests across his lap beneath a collection of aged tomes. His identity is immediately obvious to any Hobbit hero, as it is to any Ranger or Elf of Rivendell: it is no less than Bilbo Baggins, the companion of Thorin Oakenshield! To all others, he is a Hobbit in the prime of adulthood, though there is a wry look upon his round face. *"I tell you, they were there! The Old Took told stories of the archers company to me when I was a lad!"*

"That does not make it so, Master Hobbit," comes the even and calm reply of a fair Elf in flowing robes of gold. *"Did you not say that Gerontius Took was known to tell all manner of wild stories?"*

"That does not make them untrue, Lindir!" The Hobbit's curly hair bounces as he crosses his arms, offering the Elf a dour glance. His eyes brighten a bit when he sees your company at the doors of the hall. *"Here, I am willing to wager others have heard of the Hobbit archers who came to the aid of the high king at Fornost in ages past."* Lindir turns to gaze upon the company as the Hobbit eagerly motions you to join him.

"Come in, come in! Help settle a disagreement between my dear friend Lindir and I." Bilbo scurries from his stool, almost forgetting to set down his cloak and book before bowing low, an arm spreads across his ample waistline and a hand dips into the pocket of his waistcoat. *"Bilbo Baggins, at your service."*

Bilbo explains that he and Lindir were discussing an important event in the lore of Hobbits: the fall of Fornost, or King's Norbury, as Hobbits used to call it. Lindir interjects, and explains that ancient chroniclers of the old kingdom of Arthedain recount how in the year 1974 of the Third Age King Arvedui left Fornost at the coming of the forces of Angmar to assemble a host on the North Downs. Bilbo insists that the Shire sent a company of archers to assist King Arvedui while Lindir claims no records exist to confirm this, nor

have anyone in Rivendell heard of such a thing. Indeed, not even the Rangers tell tales of such an event.

Hobbit companions succeeding in a **Lore** roll are able to confirm Bilbo's version (Hobbits with *Rhymes of Lore* succeed automatically). Heroes belonging to other cultures never heard of such a thing, unless they had the story related by a Hobbit friend. No one is able to recall details on the matter.

The Encounter

Regardless of their provenance, Bilbo invites the companions to join in the conversation and share their opinions, as they are well-travelled and have undoubtedly heard many stories and histories beyond Rivendell. All companions may roll **Insight** to gain bonus Success dice for this encounter, using the rules for Preliminary Rolls (see *The One Ring*, page 151).

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the Encounter with Bilbo by keeping track of how many successes the player-heroes achieve during the Introduction and Interaction stages (see *The One Ring*, page 189) and by comparing the total to the entries at the end of this section.

Set Tolerance

Bilbo is eager to hear beings other than Elves have their say and values Wisdom over Valour. Because he is frustrated with Lindir at the moment, reduce the Tolerance by 1 if there are Elves in the group, and increase it by 1 if there are fellow Hobbits. Remember to add the Standing of any Hobbits of the Shire to the Tolerance.

Introduction

The company will be expected by Bilbo to share their knowledge of the wide world and to show the manners valued by all Hobbits, but first they must attend to the Shire tradition of small talk. By showing their **Courtesy** through a polite discussion of opening pleasantries such as the weather or their last meal, Bilbo is willing to open up to the true matter at hand.

Interaction

With **Lore** out of the conversation already, the heroes can either roll **Song** to recall a ballad from ages past or attempt to engage Master Baggins in some wordy banter using **Riddle**.

Bilbo is impressed by a successful use of either skill, as is Lindir. The Elf follows the conversation with Elven detachment, only to break his poise to make good-natured jests at Bilbo's expense and frustration whenever the Hobbit Archers of Fornost are brought up. Any characters who actively take to the Hobbit's defence are warmly thanked by Master Baggins, while those who join Lindir in his mockery are reprimanded with a scowl. After long discussion, Lindir finally tries to bring the matter to a close:

"Regardless of what any of us may believe to be true, Master Baggins, it is of little consequence. Without evidence to accompany your claims they are nothing more than fanciful tales passed down from parent to child."

But Bilbo is not defeated yet, especially if he had some adventurous Hobbits by his side backing his claims.

A Chance Meeting

The encounter with Bilbo is perfectly suited to be inserted in the course of another adventure. Doing this would leave the companions free to honour their obligation with Bilbo at a more convenient time, for example if they happen to be close to the North Downs. If the company does not embark on the quest immediately, the Loremaster should make sure to have them encounter again Lindir or Bilbo, or someone else from Rivendell to remind them of their obligation at a later date. Another option is to have the encounter occur during a Fellowship phase for a Year's End, if the whole company is present at the Last Homely House. This would let the players add the task of finding out about the Hobbit archers to the list of things they want to accomplish in a future Adventuring phase.

"I must concede you this, Lindir. Without proof, they may just be 'fanciful tales', as you call them." The Hobbit puts a finger to his lips in thought for a moment before an impish smile slips onto his face. There is a twinkle in his eyes as he turns his gaze upon the company:

"Perhaps a wager is in order! I am willing to bet that these valiant travellers will one day make the journey to Norbury and might be persuaded to return to tell us about their finds!"

Lindir's face darkens as the Hobbit speaks. *"I am not sure such a wager is wise, my friend. I do not wish to be considered accountable for such a perilous quest."* Bilbo waves his hand dismissively, *"Nonsense! What do you say my friends? Would you dare be part of this very unwise endeavour for the sake of an old Hobbit's pride?"*

Confustication and Admiration

If the companions choose to back the wager of Bilbo, they take on the task to one day visit the ruins of Fornost, to try and ascertain the presence of Hobbit archers at the fall of the city. He does not want to press upon a date for the completion of the task, but then adds that he is as not long-lived as his friend Lindir... maybe some time next year?

Bilbo is eager to learn the truth, but his excitement may be fired up or quenched by the performance of the heroes during the encounter. Compare the number of successful rolls the heroes obtained along the encounter with the entries below.

1: Bilbo is wilfully determined to prove Lindir wrong, but the companions do not strike him as sharing his enthusiasm. He will offer little support to assist them beyond a somewhat churlish encouragement.

2-4: Bilbo gladly entrusts his wager to the company, and spends the rest of their time together giving hints and advice about travelling in Eriador.

5-6: The Hobbit digs up a map of the North Downs from his belongings, a document he has found in the house of Elrond. He entrusts the companions with its keeping, saying that they can bring it back when they will return. The map provides all companions a bonus Success die to any **Lore**, **Search** or **Exploration** roll made while adventuring in the North Downs.

7+: In addition to the map, Bilbo also offers a pouch of his beloved Longbottom Leaf to help ease the weariness of their journey.

If the company is reluctant to take up Bilbo's request to explore the ruins of Fornost, then he seems a bit disappointed though Lindir eases off a bit. Regardless of whether or not the heroes take up this quest, Master Baggins asks the party to join him for supper that evening so that they might discuss other adventures as a gesture of good will and new friendships.

Bilbo and The Ring

Players of *The One Ring* know of course that Bilbo has the Ring at the time of this adventure, and that he is probably carrying it on himself. But there are a few things to consider. At this period in time, the hold of the Ruling Ring on Bilbo is strengthening, but the Hobbit is unaware of this growing burden and he does not reveal that he carries it to anyone – not even his closest friends and relations. Indeed, only Gandalf is aware of "Bilbo's Magic Ring," and the Wizard plays no part in this adventure. Moreover, the atmosphere of the Last Homely House makes the Hobbit less worried about the Ring, and there are no reasons why the companions should suspect anything.

Wise Counsel

If the company spends time in Rivendell after the conversation with Bilbo, they realise that word of the Hobbit's wager has spread among the various guests of the house of Elrond, whether the heroes accepted to be part of it or not. One evening, they are visited by Glorfindel, the Elf-lord. If the companions have played through **Nightmares of Angmar**, it is likely that they will have met him before, in which case the Loremaster should modify the following encounter slightly. Glorfindel comes bearing both a warning and a request.

"I have learned that Master Baggins asked you to visit Fornost Erain one day, the place Hobbits used to call Norbury. It is indeed no merry errand, but it might prove to be a necessary one sooner or later. The shadows of

Angmar lingered long in that region and dark things may still dwell upon that land. I was there when Arthedain fell to the malice of the Black Captain and I fear that his power has not been entirely cancelled by the passage of time."

Glorfindel is interested in the company's intentions because he fears that the Shadow might be returning to these lands – if the player-heroes have completed both **Nightmares of Angmar** and **Harder than Stone**, they will likely know something about it already. If the companions say they will visit the place, the Elf-lord asks them to bring him news of whatever they might discover in the North Downs, actually expressing a measure of haste; even if he cannot explain the reasons for it.

If the characters know or imagine that Glorfindel took part in the conflict that saw the fall of Fornost, they may ask him about the Hobbit archers that Bilbo claims came to Fornost. Unfortunately, his recollections are not useful in setting the matter: in his words, that war was long and terrible, and he remembers few things of those dark days, save the heavy burden placed upon his spirit by the loss and destruction brought upon Middle-earth.

Getting to Fornost

The adventure as presented does not provide an itinerary to reach Fornost directly from Rivendell, as the companions won't necessarily head there right away. Fornost is very distant from Rivendell, and it might be more convenient for them to travel there at another time, when their wanderings will lead them closer to the North Downs. Moreover, what might eventually befall the company along their journey to Norbury is not relevant to this adventure; when the companions finally choose to go there, the Loremaster should use the rules for travelling presented in *The One Ring*.

- Part Two -
The Dead and The Fallen

The high hills of the North Downs and the ruins of Fornost Erain are described in *Rivendell*, starting from page 57. The broken, moss-covered stones that once were the walls and paved streets of the capital city of the kingdom of Arthedain lie scattered among the verdant knolls and lush hillocks of what local folks now call Deadmen's Dike.

The heroes are most likely approaching the North Downs from the south, and they will access the ruined city by climbing a great grassy ridge (the 'dike'). When they are done climbing it, they look upon the desolation that once was a great city of Men. Fire consumed it centuries ago, and the long grass and unploughed soil have buried it, leaving almost no trace of its former glory. In places, spurs of masonry jut out from the ground, rarely reaching to a great height. Occasionally, a hole in the ground turns out to be the dirt-filled entrance of a greater structure, now sunken beneath the ground. Long shadows seem to claw out at the companions from hidden places and the chilling air carries a dirge that slithers into their ears and down their spines.

The Ghostly Voices of Fornost

Although there are dangers aplenty to be found in Fornost, one of the most insidious is the sorrow that pervades the place. For more information on the danger this poses to those who spend the night amidst the ruins, see *Rivendell*, page 59.

Exploring Fornost

Searching the ruins for signs of the lost Hobbit archers is no brief task. It will probably take several days for the company to find the evidence that Bilbo seeks. In addition, the tragic history of the city still haunts its ruins and the area is considered a grievously blighted place: all searching companions must pass a Corruption test each day, or gain 1 point of Shadow (blighted areas in the North Downs normally would require only a Corruption test each week, but the Shadow is heavier in the ruins of Fornost).

- Searching companions may choose to roll **Explore** or **Search**; each hero is allowed to make two rolls for every day of searching (TN 18). A great success equates to two successful rolls, and an extraordinary success to three successful rolls. If the companions have been entrusted with the map of the North Downs by Bilbo in Rivendell (see page 64) they all roll an additional Success die.

For every three successful rolls accumulated by the company, the Loremaster reveals one clue from those listed below as the result of their search (the items are revealed in the order they are presented).

- **Broken Blades and Bows:** The company discovers a few broken short swords and short bows. Characters who succeed in a Craft test recognise that they are crafted in a manner similar to those of the Shire, hinting that they may have been borne by the ill-fated archers.

- **Torn Banner:** This cloth standard has almost fallen to rags in the fading of centuries. It may have once been green and had some sigil upon it, but the markings have long ago been worn away by time and wear. Amazingly the staff upon which it hanged is intact, though it is only six-feet long.

- **Tattered Map:** This is a simple map of animal skin and inked in oil. It is faded, tattered and barely legible, but it clearly shows a depiction of Fornost Erain as it stood one thousand years ago. There are several faded markings towards the centre of the city, along with the simple word "tunnels." (see **Part Four – Into Darkness**).

Where is Talandil, the Ranger of the North Downs?

Talandil, the self-appointed guardian of Fornost Erain is described in *Rivendell*, on page 59. If the Loremaster wants to introduce him, he may have the Ranger spy upon the company, trying to learn about their intentions. If any companion passes a Search or Explore test by rolling a ᚠ, the Loremaster should then ask for an Awareness test; on a success, the hero notices Talandil. If he is invited to meet the companions and he is informed of their quests, the Ranger will grow curious (he knows nothing about the archers) and endeavour to help them in their search: all Search and Explore tests from that moment are rolled against TN 16.

Exploration Hazards

If a companion rolls an ᚠ on a **Search** or **Explore** roll, then the company faces an accident, using the same manner as Hazard episodes (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 160). Listed below are a few examples:

Wrong Footing (Scout – Wound)
While exploring one of the half-buried stone keeps amidst the ruins of Fornost, the Scout must make an **Explore** check to notice that the long and winding stairwell that they are descending is not stable. If the Scout is successful, he manages to avoid stepping upon the degenerated masonry. If he fails, the stairwell gives way and he loses a Success die of Endurance. If he rolls an ᚠ result, he suffers a Wound instead.

Goblin Scouts (Huntsman – Dangerous Meeting)
Finding a short-shafted arrow that he believes may have belonged to one of the mythic Hobbit archers, the

Huntsman must make a **Hunting** test (TN 12) to recognise it correctly as Goblin-crafted. If he fails the roll, he leads the company to where he found the arrow, only to be ambushed by a number of Snaga Trackers equal to the number in the company.

Lingering Shadows (Look-Out – Fatigue)
As the party makes camp one night in the ruins of Fornost long, flickering shadows seem to cling to nearby ruins, troubling the party. The Look-out Man should make an **Awareness** test to check there is nothing there. If he fails, his sleep is troubled by dark dreams and awakens both tired and filled with doubts. He gains Fatigue equal to his carried gear again, or twice that amount if he rolled an instead.

Echoes of War (All Companions – Corruption)
While moving through the ruins a long, eerie silence falls over the city. There is no sound of northern winds or whispers of beasts. Only quiet. Slow, the sound of a great battle rises, seeming far off before it draws closer. Eventually, it sounds as if a great and terrible fight is occurring all around them and then, suddenly, all is quiet again. Each member of the company must make a Corruption test or gain 1 Shadow. If they roll an , they gain 2 Shadow instead.

Archers in the Night

Starting from the second evening of the company's search, the heroes are beset by mysterious spirits. These spectres have long lingered in the ruins of Fornost and have been awakened by the coming of the Orcs. Now, they have returned from death to put an end to anyone trespassing into this once fair realm...

One night, a strong wind rises from the north, suddenly howling with a renewed chill. It is so powerful and fierce that the companions' cloaks and mantles are whipped about and the campfire is suddenly extinguished. As the wind fades, the heroes hear a whistle mingling with the evening air. It is high-pitched, sorrowful and fierce. All of a sudden, an arrow strikes the centre of the camp, followed by a second, and a third. Soon the sky is filled with piercing shafts. In the darkness, just at the edge of their vision, the companions see small shapes with bright eyes raise their bows for a second volley...

These are no hateful spirits of Angmar bound to the battlefield. Instead they are the very evidence that the company has sought, though they do not know it yet. They are the restless spirits of the Hobbit Archers of Fornost who came to serve the High King so long ago. They swore an oath to serve King Arvedui with all the faith of the Shire and their stout hearts are still bound to it – even beyond death. To the companions, they appear as little more than small, ghostly forms between three and four feet in height, with few discernible details. They seem to fade when the company attempts to look closely.

Harrowing Memories

The arrows shot by the Hobbit spectres seem very real to the companions, and the damage they cause to anyone who is hit does not seem to have anything spiritual about it!

On the first night they manifest (the second night of searching the ruins) the Hobbit archers appear to unleash two volleys of arrows on the companions: each hero must pass an **Athletics** test (TN 14) for each volley, or suffer an Endurance loss equal to the roll of a Success die as the arrows seem absolutely tangible and lethal!

On the second night of apparition, the archers let loose three volleys: each companion must pass an **Athletics** test (TN 16) for each volley, or again suffer an Endurance loss equal to the roll of a Success die.

On the third night, the Hobbits fire four volleys, with the consequences detailed above. With the passing of each night, the number of volleys increase by one and the difficulty of the Athletics tests raises by one level...

The supernatural origin of the attacks is much clearer in the morning though – all that remains of the arrows in the light of the sun are a few broken shafts or dented arrowheads with no shafts at all. Companions tipped off by this may try to oppose their disbelief to the dangerous visions during one of the following nights:

- A hero openly stating that he defies the dangerousness of the arrow attack may make a Valour test against TN 18. Upon a success, the hero is considered impervious to the spectral arrows, that now seem to pass through him as if he wasn't there.

During the attacks any members of the company who state they are paying close attention to the spectres may make an **Awareness** test (TN18). If successful they notice that these ghostly archers seem to have round, sad faces and their tattered tunics have a spectral green colour.

If at any point during an attack the company makes it known that they have any of the artefacts found in the ruined city the spirits instantly fade away. Otherwise, the spirits let loose their volleys and then retreat into the darkness.

About the Spectres

The Hobbit archers attacking the company are only incorporeal shades, and cannot be harmed by normal means. As explained in the *Rivendell* supplement, weapons that do not possess Enchanted Qualities cannot inflict any Endurance loss on creatures possessing the Ghost-form special ability, nor can they wound them (see *Rivendell*, page 76). Being incorporeal, they also can harm their enemies only by supernatural means (see the **Harrowing Memories** section on page 67). The spirits of the Hobbit archers can still be encountered in the North Downs because they swore an oath to King Arvedui. However, the blight weighing upon this land is taking a slow but terrible toll upon them. While they have not become servants of the Enemy yet (as shown by their reduced Hate points score), it will eventually happen if they are not put to rest.

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
30	3
Parry	Armour
5	2d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 1
Movement, 4	Custom, 3
Perception, 3	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
-	-
Special Abilities	
Ghost Form	Strike Fear

- Part Three -
Into Darkness

Once the companions have found the tattered map they have the chance to study it in detail. It is more than just a general depiction of Fornost Erain, as it indicates the existence of what appears to be a complex of tunnels opening under one of the main buildings of the ancient city, the Hall of Eärendur.

As they might remember from their conversation with Bilbo and Lindir in Rivendell, some stories tell how King Arvedui left the city to reach his army assembled in the North Downs. It is likely that these tunnels were used by the King himself to flee!

Characters who succeed at an **Awareness** test notice a name written on one corner of the map: "Captain Rufus T-.", penned in a simple flowing script...

The Hall of Eärendur

Using the map as a guide (or asking Talandil about it, if he is present) the companions are able to locate the Hall of Eärendur. It was once the largest palace in Fornost, though it fell to ruin long ago. Today, only a great earthen mound and a few large white stones covered by moss and thorny undergrowth remain. But even as a spectre of its former glory, there is still great beauty to be uncovered, as every turned stone reveals a broken mosaic, a marble statue, a twisting pillar carved with entwining decorations.

A half-collapsed archway that once stood as the grand entrance to the hall now leads into the mound. Long shadows reach from dark corners, yet faint rays of sunlight still peek desperately through the ceiling, where the fall of stones have opened holes in the surface of the mound.

There aren't many paths inside the mound, as the vast majority of the palace has crumbled under the combined weight of warfare and time, but it is not easy to keep one's direction while under the earth. The companions are often forced to push through narrow openings to continue their underground exploration, and the chambers they cross are revealed to be barren and empty at the light of their torches. Eventually, the companions are able to find their bearing thanks to the indication on their map, and after several

wearisome hours of trudging on in the stifling darkness they reach the great throne room of Fornost.

A Little Footpad

As the companions make their way underground, those who succeed in an Awareness test hear odd noises softly echoing in the darkness. If anyone specifically attempts to discover if they're being followed, they may may attempt a Hunting test (TN 16). If successful, the companions discover a single Snaga Scout who is tracking the party (on orders from Gishak Gashnaga, see page 71). If he is not slain in the same round he is discovered, he will flee into the darkness.

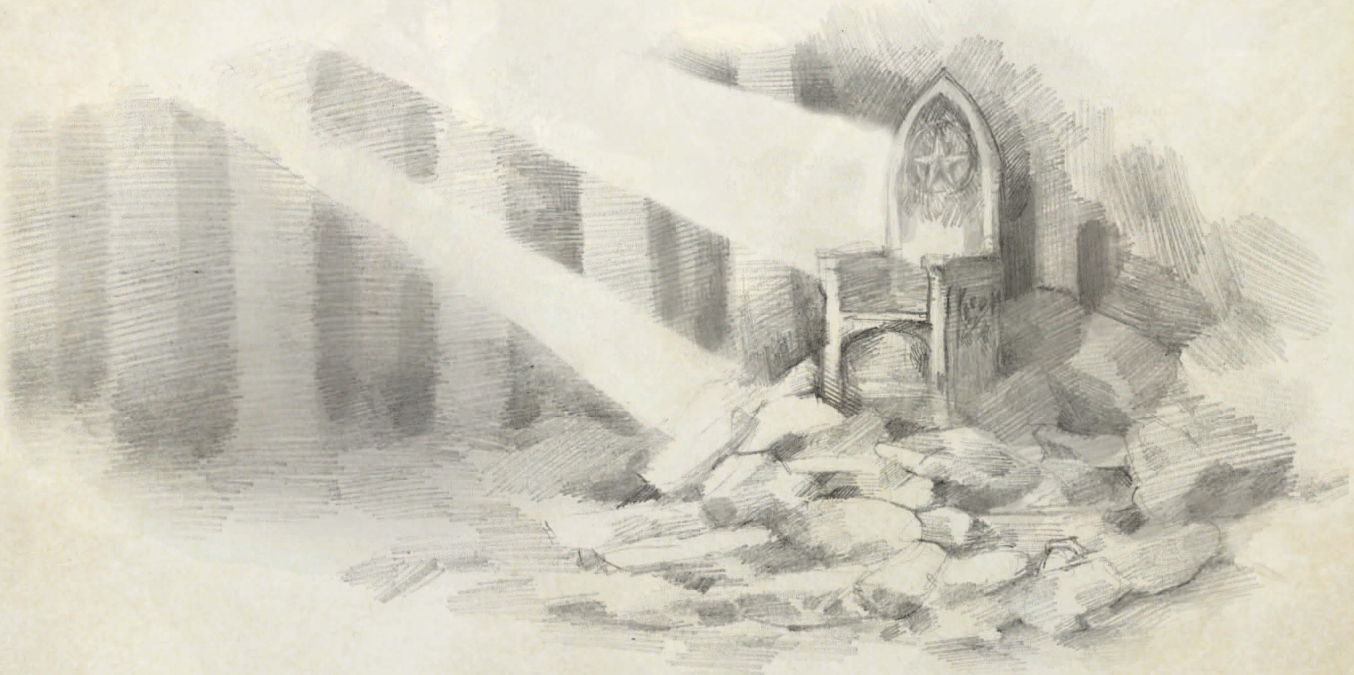
The Throne Room of Arvedui

This vast chamber is partially intact, especially compared to the rest of the underground hall. The far side of it is buried under tons of rubble, but at least half of its length is free and relatively untouched. There is a timeless beauty to be found in this place: stone pillars reach up towards the ceiling hidden by the darkness, and their size and carvings remind all onlookers that this was once a place of majesty and power. Some light from the surface streams through invisible openings and descends upon a raised throne that appears as if emerging from the broken stones around it. The light bathes it in a reassuring warmth that feels out of place in the otherwise bleak surroundings. Its high marble back is carved with the image of a single, five-pointed star. It is untouched by decay.

A Secret Hoard

If a companion spends a point of Hope on any skill roll made in the throne room, he notices how the light seeping through an opening on the ceiling briefly rests upon the centre of a spiralling mosaic on the floor, to the right of the throne of Arvedui. If inspected with a Search roll, the mosaic contours reveal a removable slab of marble. Under the heavy slab lies a hoard of treasure, hidden there centuries ago by men loyal to the King, before they left the city to the plunder and ruin of their victors. Golden dishes, cups studded with precious stones, lacquered drinking horns, bejewelled books and manuscripts, illuminated maps and scrolls, and a small armoury of items of worth is secreted there, amounting to 100 C**.

On the left end of the room is a stone arch, edged with intertwining tree branches that rise to half the height of the chamber. A flowing script graces its decorations: players possessing the *Elven-lore* Trait or making a **Lore** test (TN



16) recognise the language as Sindarin. The writing reads *"This way rest the Stones of Far Seeing, may their watch be ever-vigilant against the Shadow"*. The arch was once blocked by a stone door that is now lying in pieces on the ground, and opens into a half-collapsed passageway that used to lead to the Dome of Sight (see *Rivendell*, pages 59-60), the chamber where the wondrous Seeing Stones of the North-kingdom were kept for centuries. The passage is currently blocked halfway, and as such it leads nowhere, but someone is working to open it...

Unexpected Guests

Moments after the company deciphers the writing on the arch, a chill wind sweeps through the throne room and the already feeble sunlight fades into darkness. Four Man-shaped forms rise from the shadowy far side of the room, spectral and born of darkness. There is a cold hatred for all things living and beautiful burning in the eyes of these Fell Wraiths, and they wield rusted but wicked-looking blades, spears and battered shields. They advance with a predatory calm towards the company.

"For Angmar, Our Lord."

There are four Fell Wraiths facing the company. They are formidable opponents, as they can be truly harmed only using weapons possessing Enchanted Qualities, and their Unnatural Vitality keeps them fighting until their Endurance and Hate scores are depleted.

If the companions show the intention of retreating whence they came, the wickedness permeating the place makes its presence felt in a new form — a cave-in occurs, cutting off the entrance to the throne room with a great pile of stone and earth. If the company takes the passage leading to the Dome of Sight they are trapped, as the tunnel is blocked after a few dozen yards.

There is luckily another way out. A companion possessing the *Tunnelling* Trait automatically perceives a feeble draft of air, something that other companions discover only upon an **Awareness** roll. Following the draft, the heroes find the passage from where the Fell Wraiths emerged. It opens on the far side of the hall, and is partially hidden by the debris. The companions will need to succeed in an **Athletics** test to climb the dangerous rubble and reach the opening; those who fail lose 3 points of Endurance (a hero is Wounded if he fails rolling an). Once inside the passage, the heroes are safe from the Fell Wraiths: they stop attacking them and disappear.

Fell Wraiths:

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	**Hate**
35	6
Parry	**Armour**
5 + 2 (shield)	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 0
Movement, 4	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Pitted blade	2
Cruel spear	2
Special Abilities	
Denizen of the Dark	*Unnatural Vitality*
Fear of Fire	*Wraith-like*
Strike Fear	-

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Pitted blade	4	10	12	Disarm
Cruel spear	4	9	12	Pierce

- Part Four - The Last Battle of the Green Company

Alone in the darkened passage, the companions contemplate their remaining option: they must push through the ruined remains of the Hall of Eärendur. Luckily for them, the tunnel they have entered leads to the passages that King Arvedui used to leave his beloved city centuries before. After a few suffocating yards of pitch-

black darkness, the heroes discover a narrow stairwell that descends further beneath the city.

The descent is difficult, as the stairway is narrow and the air is getting colder. Water coats the walls of the passage, as if it was inside a well. Finally, the steps lead to another passage, cut into the stone bowels of the earth. The footsteps of the companions seem to break the hallowed peace of a tomb that has remained long undisturbed.

After what seems like countless hours, the companions realise that they must have walked enough distance to be somewhere outside the ruins of the city and among the hills of the North Downs. After a sharp corner, the narrow passage suddenly opens into a cavern of rock, a gaping natural chamber large enough that its ceiling and far confines stretch beyond the light of the torches.

In the flickering light, the companions see that part of the floor is littered with bones. These remains belong to several different folks: some are smaller, others are larger. The smaller bones belong beyond any doubt to a dozen Hobbit archers: several broken bows and arrows are scattered on the ground. The larger remains are clearly identifiable to belong to tall Men. Misshapen skulls give away the identity of the other remains: Orcs.

In this cavern, over a thousand years ago, King Arvedui and his bodyguard was ambushed as he left Fornost to reach his men in the North Downs, and several Hobbits who were helping him to flee died defending him!

The companions may receive the above information by succeeding on a **Search** roll, or by invoking applicable Traits, but there isn't much time: unfortunately for the companions, not all the Orcs around the cavern are dead ones... The war-band of Gishak Gashnaga uses the passage to enter the ruins of Fornost!

A low tittering howl echoes through the cave. From the passage through which the company just came the heroes spy the distant flicker of torchlight and hear the sound of a large number of scurrying feet. Orcs are searching for the companions! If the companions rush in the opposite direction, they quickly reach the end of King Arvedui's secret passage.

Who is Gishak Gashnaga?

Gishak is a Great Orc from Mount Gram, first introduced in *Rivendell*, on page 58. He came to the North Downs with a small army, but his force was destroyed by the Rangers of the North. He fled unscathed, and hid in tunnels under the North Downs, plotting his revenge. He has made his home in the abandoned catacombs and tunnels dug under the ruins of Fornost, and many have secretly joined him there. Now, his men are extending the underground complex of passages with night after night of tireless digging. Scouts have noticed the company's intrusion in what they now consider their domain, and Gishak is assembling a war-band to kill them all!

The Northern Valley

The cavern eventually leads into another twisting passage that finally opens into a small dale cut deep among rising hillsides. There would be a simple peace to be found here, if Orcs were not pursuing. The night sky is filled with stars, and their light tinges with silver the pines and blooming birch trees that flank the sides of the small, green valley.

Among the tall grass, bones and broken weapons glitter in the starlight, untouched by the passing years. Here, many Hobbit archers died for their King, and now lie unburied, their deed unrecorded and forgotten by everyone.

To the surprise of the heroes, a fresh, warm wind blowing from the west carries the whisper of a song. It starts as a soft, melancholy tune, then it rises to the rhythm of a merry marching song.

As the companions take a look around, possibly looking for a way out, they realise they are not alone. Each companion feels a queer chill run down his spine, or feels the hair on the back of his neck stand up. Then, a spirit materialises before their eyes. It is a small creature, barely three feet in height, clad in a simple corslet of green leather. Ringlets of hair frame his face and he holds a small bow in his hand...

Rufus' Song

This is the song sung by the Hobbit archers who came to Fornost in service of King Arvedui. The spirits of the Green Company still sing it, lamenting their fate and the knowledge that they will never again see the hills of the Shire.

Hobbits go marching north to war
The Shire! The Shire!
Longing for our hearth so warm
The Shire! The Shire!
We go to serve and lend our bows
And off to face the northern woes!
And stop the Shadow
Hobbit go marching north!
And slay the darkness
Hobbits go marching north!

Crying aloud with shaft to string
The Shire! The Shire!
The Enemy shall feel our sting
The Shire! The Shire!
Yet we long to turn away
We know the cause to which we stay!
Sing one last song
Hobbits go marching north!
Sing our last song
Hobbits go marching north!

"My name is Rufus Took, and I was the Captain of the Green Company. Long ago, we left our homes in the Shire to come to the aid of the King of Fornost, and we gave our lives so that he could escape the city. I was the last to fall, here in this very place.

"From the day of our passing, we have honoured our oath to protect the city of our King. When the filth from Mount Gram came, we were stirred, and arose once again to answer the call of battle. We will not rest until the enemy is defeated.

"But we do not have much time. The curse laid upon these ruins by the evil usurper who captured the city long ago ever gnaws at our souls, threatening to throw us into nothingness, or worse, to draw us into an abyss from where we would return only as evil shades, hating the living.

"If you survive this day, search for the bow that I once used to fight my last battle, and bring home the words of our marching song, so that someone of our blood may sing it, and give us rest."

When Rufus is done with his speech, he nocks a single ghostly arrow to his bow and then shoots it into the air. The dart whistles as it speeds into the night sky. As the arrow disappears, dozens of spectral Hobbit archers materialise around the company – the Green Company has come again!

The Coming of Gishnak

The Orcs that were searching for the company do not take much to locate the heroes, and soon emerge out of the cave in battle array. At the forefront is Gishnak, a huge, ugly Orc with a misplaced jaw, the consequence of his latest encounter with the Rangers of the North. When the Orc sees the companions, he points a claw-like hand towards them, as if he were attempting to tear out their very hearts:

"Who are you filthy trespassers? How do you dare enter my domain? I will have your heads for this, or maybe I'll spare you, and flay the skin off your backs with my whip..."

It is in that very moment that the companions discover that they are again alone – there is no trace of the Hobbit archers!

Gishak's Charge

Gishak's war-band charges into the fray. The enemy group is composed of Gishak, a number of Orcs of Mount Gram equal to three times the size of the company and a sinister trio of gaunt figures, three sorcerous Hill-men of Rhudaur (see *Rivendell*, pages 72 and 73 for their characteristics). Generally, the Orcs (including Gishak) charge head-first against the company, while the three gaunt Men start chanting their *Dreadful Spells* or throw their spears from a rearward position. Gishak is a powerful Great Orc, as described at page 237 of *The One Ring*.

An instant before the Orcs crash into the company, the Hobbit archers appear on both sides of the companions' formation, and a volley of ghostly arrows fly into the advancing creatures, among their cries of surprise and dismay. Reduce the Endurance of all Orcs by the roll of a Success die (including Gishak). Then, the battle rages on. The presence of the Hobbit archers alongside the companions makes all their opponents Weary for the length of the fight. Moreover, if anyone in the company proposes to sing the Hobbit song they heard when they entered the valley, the Loremaster must ask for a **Song** roll. For every hero who succeeds, another volley of arrows hits each of the Orcs, reducing their Endurance by the roll of a further Success die.

When half of his war-band is taken out of the fight, Gishak reconsiders his priorities and turns tail, heading for the cavern opening. If he is allowed to escape, the Great Orc and his subterranean domain will have to be dealt with at another time.

Victory

Once the battle is over, the Hobbit archers disappear one by one, leaving only their Captain to face the heroes. The Hobbit seems to offer a weary smile and then bows.

"Thank you for helping us defend the city of our King. Now, remember what I asked you, find my bow and give us rest".

With these last words, the shade of the Hobbit captain fades away as a breeze blows from the West.

Rufus' Bow

Searching for the bow of Rufus Took is a prolonged action, requiring four successful rolls of **Search** as the companions examine most of the remains of the

Green Company left on the ancient field of battle. If they accomplish the task, they finally find what they are looking for: it is a simple bow, with a grip wound with leather and fastened with a brass tack inscribed with the initial "RT". When a companion lifts the bow from the place where it rested, a lonesome bird seems to sing the first few notes of the Hobbits' marching song.

Once they have rested and are ready, the companions can finally leave the ruins of Fornost, and find their way home.

- Epilogue - Bringers of Tidings

If the company meets Bilbo and tell him about their adventure, the Hobbit is both heartened and saddened when he hears the story of the Green Company. He takes any recovered artefact the company shows him for what they are, proof that there were Hobbit archers at Fornost at the time of its fall. If he is told about Rufus' song, he questions the company extensively, hoping that they can recite it to him so that he may record it.

If told about their finds in Fornost, Glorfindel and Lindir prove to be much harder to convince, and express a wish to study what the companions have found there closely, before they may return them to the Shire.

What interests Glorfindel more is news of Gishak, and the wraiths encountered by the company in the throne room of Arvedui. His face darkens when the company speaks of the evil they witnessed. He asks them to bring this news to Lord Elrond as soon as they are able.

Fellowship Phase

If a Fellowship phase follows this adventure, the characters are offered refuge in Rivendell. The company is invited to sit in council with Elrond, Glorfindel and Lindir to discuss the dark things that came to Fornost and what possible threats could be growing in Angmar.

Otherwise, they might accept another offer: that of spending a Fellowship phase at Bag-end, in Hobbiton, the Shire...

Bilbo has returned home, taking the artefacts of the Green Company to the Mathom House in Michel Delving. If the company joins Bilbo, they may even be offered the option to take him as a Patron.

The Marching Song of the Green Company

A companion may try to reconstruct the march of the Green Company by choosing the Write a Song Fellowship phase undertaking (*see Rivendell, page 23*). The difficulty of the Song roll to compose the march is equal to TN 14, as the song is considered a *Hobbit* song (*Traditional*), and is a *marching* tune (*Thematic*).

The difficulty is reduced by a further -2 if it is composed in Rivendell, or the composer possesses the *Minstrelsy* Trait, and by another -2 if Bilbo is helping out the companion.

the company of - the wain -

- **When:** The company may undertake this adventure at any time after the year 2953. It is worthy to note that the adventure, being episodic in its presentation, may be the object of a single Adventuring phase, or otherwise allow the companions to encounter the mysterious caravan over the course of several Adventuring phases (to make its threat seem more pervasive).

- **Where:** On the road along the Greenway, between Tharbad and Bree. Because this adventure revolves around a group of travelling traders, the Loremaster can present it at almost any point along its route.

- **What:** The Company of the Wain is an itinerant group of wanderers bringing wares and offering services to the scattered folk of Eriador. The heroes encounter them and witness some strange happenings that may raise their suspicions about the real objectives of some of its members.

- **Why:** There are several reasons why the heroes should become interested in the wandering traders. The most obvious one is curiosity — a travelling company is a very unusual sight in Eriador at this time.

- **Who:** The company commander is a woman called Uathach of Tharbad. She poses as a blind seer, but she is actually on the service of Saruman the Wise. While being a servitor of the head of the White Council would not make her an enemy of the companions, she has been given the task of establishing a secret network of spies for the White Wizard.

Adventuring Phase

This adventure is divided into five parts. The first part contains a detailed description of the Company of the Wain, and can be used separately from the events of this adventure.

Part One - A Travelling Fair

The player-heroes first encounter the Company of the Wain. As the company is departing in the early morning, they witnesses a suspicious scene. A man with a burlap sack tied over his head attempts to scramble out of one of the carts, but is quickly battered and thrown back in.

Part Two - Investigating the Caravan

The caravan is on the road again. The player-heroes consider their options in dealing with the matter. Eventually, the kidnapped man is handed over to two mysterious riders.

Part Three - False Accusations

The caravan stops in another settlement, and the player-heroes are accused of being brigands. A folk-moot will be called, and their voices heard.

Part Four - She Sees, She Knows

When Uathach of Tharbad realises the threat posed by the companions she will act to counter their schemes. She will rely on her minions, but she may also call upon the direct support of her own master...

Part Five - When Dark Things...

The investigation of the player-heroes has attracted the interest of a company of Rangers. Their leader, Randír, asks the company to aid him in bringing an end to the infiltrations of spies in Eriador.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules found within *Rivendell*, any revelation episodes during this adventure are likely to tie into the machinations of Uathach of Tharbad, or into those of her master, Saruman the White. The company will find communities already turned against them, erstwhile allies will become corrupted and the heroes will generally find themselves weighed down from paranoia, if not from the effects of the sorcery of Saruman (see also *Part Four: She Sees, She Knows*).

Epilogue

Sooner or later the companions will stop their investigations and draw their conclusions, possibly with the help of the Wise.

- Part One -
A Travelling Fair

The folk of Eriador has dwindled steadily in the last centuries (see also *Rivendell*, page 32). In recent times, the Fell Winter of 2911 and the following floods have taken a heavy toll, and the most southerly regions of Eriador have been grievously depopulated. Their cities cast into ruin, those few people who remain there are huddled into lonely hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Traffic on the main roads of Eriador is now sparse at best, especially since the bridge at Tharbad has been ruined by the floods.

All this notwithstanding, the old North Road does see the occasional wanderer. Brave and hardy travellers keep using the Greenway to bring what wares reach the crossings at Tharbad from the South, all the way to Bree.

The Company of the Wain are among them, and they travel on that route for months on end, from north to south, stopping at every settlement they encounter on their way. If no hamlet is available for long, the company stops at a prominent farmstead, allowing what folk that dwell in an area to gather their goods and meet them for an improvised fair.

The company is composed mostly of Bree-folk, although there are a couple of members from further afield among the wagons. Most travel with their family, with sons and daughters helping in their trade. Each trader is a shareholder in the venture and owns one or more wains, which they convert into shops and stalls when they stop.

There are more than a dozen wains in the caravan at any time, either set in a wide ring when encamped, or proceeding on the road slowly in a long column, led by the wain of their commander, Uathach the Seer, carrying the standard of the company: a painted board set on a pole, showing a covered wagon with a tent of many colours.

Uathach's Secret

While not everyone in the company is aware of it, the caravan is being exploited by Saruman the White for his scheming. The proud Wizard has been pushed to do so by his jealousy of Gandalf, and the suspicion aroused by the Grey Wizard's dealings in the Shire: starting from the year 2953, Saruman sets spies to watch upon the actions of the Grey Pilgrim, and soon resolves to keep agents in Eriador.

The Company's commander is a capable means to this end. Though she travels under the guise of blind Uathach of Tharbad, she isn't actually blind at all, and hails from far beyond the river Greyflood. She was in fact born in the port-city of Umbar, and Númenórean blood runs in her veins. She came to Gondor many years ago, and met Saruman in Minas Tirith during one of his frequent visits, and entered his service.

Uathach has been prepared for this mission by the White Wizard himself: her goal is to enlist more men to his cause. These agents must answer to Uathach, either by reporting any unusual occurrences they would chance to witness, or even by assuming the roles of travelling traders and vagabonds and accumulating information about the dwellers of Eriador, the deeds of the Rangers and the movements of Gandalf.

The presence of Uathach in the Company of the Wain ensures that she can quickly receive any tidings from her informants, and that she can readily send messages to her master. Moreover, the activities of the caravan ensure to draw attention from her dealings. The Company travels according to her whims, taking her to agents she must pass messages to, or to settlements she must watch.

Uathach is a tall woman, handsome and well built, with a bearing betraying her noble descent. But she plays the role of the blind diviner convincingly, her grey eyes helping her greatly in making the ruse a believable one. Everyone in the caravan pays her respect, more out of fear than out of respect for her wisdom.

The Company of the Wain

The wagons sell the goods and provide the services listed below. The manner in which the Loremaster permits the player-heroes to shop and purchase items is based on their Standard of Living, unless specified differently.

- Based on what is described on pages 120 and 121 of the rules for *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*,, a *Rich* or *Prosperous* companion should be able to afford to buy anything on offer, and possibly to pay for at least another hero in the group, while a character from a *Martial* culture might afford to pay for a single expense; *Frugal* and *Poor* heroes may not pay for anything.

Caradog, the Bear-baiter

A large cage of wood and iron sits on a large wagon, empty except for straw laid across the floor for bedding. Outside, a bear chained to a thick pole set into the ground 'dances', a thin rope looped through a hole cut cruelly into its snout. A short man with long hair directs the animal's dance with what looks much like a fishing pole with the rope attached to the end. As he twists, lifts, and dips the stick, the bear stands on its hind legs, bends or turns around, affecting a crude 'dance'. A crowd stands in a semi-circle around the bear, jeering and laughing.The wiry little man is called Caradog. A hunter from Dunland, he doesn't talk much, and is gruff and curt if approached. He will only talk about how he trained the bear if offered a drink or a gift.

Caradog is a minion of Uathach. He provides one of the shows needed to draw customers to the stalls and counters of the merchants. He is a violent, cruel man, capable of inflicting suffering upon animals as well as any other living creature without any regret or remorse. He speaks in a growling tone, and seems to understand the mewlings of his tormented pet.

Caradog, Dunlending Hunter:

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
15	4
Parry	Armour
4	2d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 3
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Spear	2
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	-

Traps

A second cart is attached to Caradog's wagon. A cruel display of iron traps hangs from its rafters. The traps range in size; some look large enough to have been built to catch an animal as large as a bear, others for prey as small as a hare. All have a plate used as a trigger and spikes about the maw designed to hold its ward indefinitely. No merchant is present at this cart, as the traps belong to Caradog. The Dunlending can be convinced to part with one or two traps if the prospective customer can pass an **Awe**, **Persuade** or **Courtesy** test . The price for a trap large enough to catch medium-sized creatures (Men, Hobbits, Wargs and so on) is 1 Treasure point per trap; the same price buys the companion a set of smaller traps.

A companion carrying a large trap or a set of small traps adds 1 Encumbrance to his carried gear, and receives 1 bonus Success die to use with his **Hunting** skill. If the player can come up with an appropriate plan, the large trap can be used during a battle: if the player succeed in a **Hunting** roll against a difficulty equal to 10 plus the highest Attribute level among the enemies, one adversary (Loremaster's choice) steps on the trap and is considered *severely hindered* for the rest of the fight (see *The One Ring*, page 181).

Áinfean, the Apothecary

A collection of odd glass bottles and charms are displayed on shelves on this wagon. The bottles are labelled with strange symbols and filled with substances stranger still. Áinfean, a middle-aged woman with fiery red hair kept in two plaits attends the wares, ready to explain the benefits of her concoctions if asked to. The goods she offers are all actually quite effective, giving away the great lore that Áinfean possesses. But if anyone shows a learned interest, Áinfean is quick to belittle her own craft, dismissing her work as no more than rustic remedies of dubious effectiveness.

This is what Áinfean has on her shelves (in brackets are the effects of each remedy): *Sundew Tea* (cures coughs, strengthens the heart and alleviates stomach pains), *Greenleaf Tea* (facilitates digestion), *Tincture of Lebethron Bark* (helps babies and children sleep), *Yellow-flower Infusion* (improves mood), *Witch Milk* (diuretic, helps treating infection) and *Elderberry Cordial* (helpful in treating fevers, and help impaired breathing).

A player-hero with the *Herb-lore* Trait automatically recognises yellow-flower as golden moly, a type of lily supposedly capable of strengthening a man's power to resist sorcery. Only one sample of this infusion is available, and the apothecary demands 1 Treasure point for it (the price of a riding horse!). The draught lets a single companion lower the difficulty of all Corruption rolls due to sorcerous effects by two levels (TN -4) for the duration of the Adventuring phase.

Áinfean's real speciality is the mixing of poisons. Learned in her upbringing among the covens of the Hill-Men of Rhudaur, she is quite skilled and able to easily estimate the amount and method of application for nearly any creature. Uathach has used her talents to great effect, poisoning several men who posed obstacles to her designs.

Del's Dwarven Spirits

Del Thistlewool is a vendor originally from Combe. The tall, ruddy man loudly proclaims the virtues of his product, which he calls 'Dwarven Spirits'. He claims he forged a strong friendship with Dwarven wanderers from the Blue Mountains, and that he gained their permission to sell their secret beverage to the Men of Eriador. His bottles are displayed on a table outside his cart, their labels illustrated with a crude drawing of Dwarven ghosts pursuing a hapless drunkard.

The Breeman's wares are displayed on a table in the open air. He will provide a single free sample, but will attempt to avoid doing so near a Dwarven player-hero. A Dwarf will recognise on taste that these spirits are not of Dwarven origin, and may take offence accordingly. Del's liquor is in truth a potent beverage he himself distils in a travelling still, a crude copper kettle hidden inside his cart.

Uathach the Seer

Animal bones and stones inscribed with symbols of portent swing from a tent erected beside this cart. Exotic smells waft from the curtained entrance, inviting passers-by to enter and learn about what the future may hold for them.

Inside, a woman in her thirties clad in voluminous robes and silks sits on the corner of a rich carpet woven with strange markings, her head covered with a black veil. The woman presents herself as Uathach of Tharbad, as she lifts her veil to reveal her vacant grey eyes for dramatic effect. She lost her sight in the practice of fire-gazing, a form of divination she learned in the far South, she says.

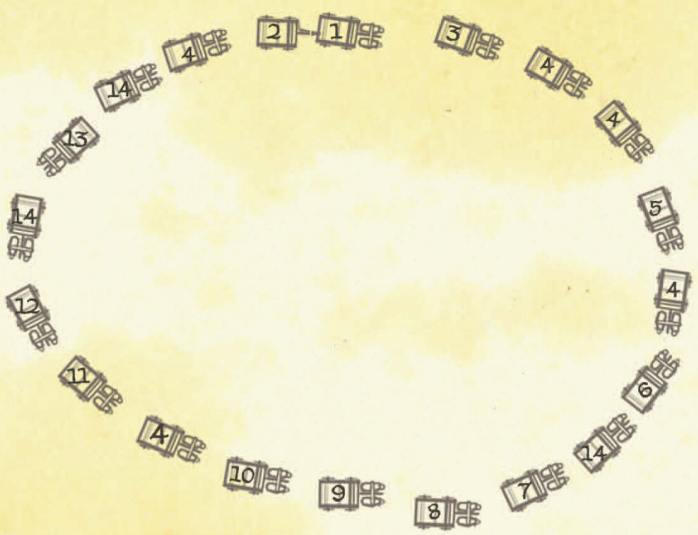
Uathach volunteers to read the fortune of one companion, for a small fee that is easily payable by a *Prosperous* or *Rich* adventurer. She asks the chosen hero to hold out his right hand. Then, she grasps the outstretched hand in her left hand, and asks the companion to pose her a question. Pretending to be directed by the hero's voice, Uathach stares without ever blinking right into the eyes of the companion for several long minutes. Then, she releases her grip with a sigh, and closes her unsettling eyes. Slowly, her response arrives in the form of short, whispered sentences: the Loremaster must provide a cryptic answer to the hero's question to the best of his ability, trying to suggest some actual power, but without actually crossing over into the supernatural -Uathach is not gifted with foresight, she is simply very cunning.

Any companion who spends some time observing the woman during the reading may propose an **Insight** task; if the roll is successful, the hero finds her fortune-telling to be very suspicious. On a great or extraordinary success, the companion starts to even doubt Uathach's blindness. If confronted with this information, Uathach flares with indignation, and chases the companions out of her tent.

Uathach, Treacherous Fortune-teller:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
14	8
Parry	Armour
4	2d*
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 1
Movement, 2	Custom, 3
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Jagged Knife	3
Special Abilities	
Commanding Voice	-

*Should Uathach fear for her life, she will start wearing armour under her garments. Caradog and Thelred are her right-hand men, and are ready to die for her.



The Company of the Wain

1. Caradog the Bear-baiter
2. Traps
3. Ainfean the Apothecary
4. Supplies
5. Del's Dwarven Spirits
6. Uathach the Seer
7. Shell Game
8. Thelred the Rider
9. Terry's Menagerie
10. The Wose
11. Osbert the Woodturner
12. Larry's Fireworks
13. Wilma's Furs
14. Fodder
15. Lodin the Toymaker

Shell Game

A group of men play a game with a small round stone the size of a pea and three walnut shells set upon a table. A lanky fellow with a big nose and wearing a black felt cap shuffles dextrously around the three walnut shells, challenging the onlookers to guess under which shell the pea-sized stone might be. Several individuals wager a coin or two, and eventually most lose their money grumbling, but some seem to win each round. Eyeing the companions, the tablemaster invites them to play with a gesture.

If any companion feels to be more clever than the tablemaster, he is welcome to play and attempt an **Awareness** test. But the game is unwinnable, as it is just a trick devised to make easy money — the tablemaster can place or remove the stone from under any shell and thus win all the time, and the onlookers are shills backing the act. The Loremaster may let the companion attempt task rolls to try and win the game, but to no avail: a companion gullible enough to fall for the trick loses valuable coins, and is considered to be at a lower Standard of Living for the rest of the Adventuring phase (A *Rich* companion becomes *Prosperous*, and so on). If the heroes try to expose the ruse they will eventually confront the tablemaster with an accusation. When this happens, all the onlookers will drop their façade and threaten the company with violence. There are six thugs, plus the tablemaster.

Thugs:

Attribute Level	
2	
Endurance	Hate
8	1
Parry	Armour
3	1d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 1
Movement, 1	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Craven	-

Thelred the Rider

In the centre of the caravan, a talented horseman performs. He rides inside an area bound within a circle of wooden stakes, showing off his ability with the sword and spear from horseback, and conducting assorted feats of extraordinary horsemanship that cause his crowd of onlookers to cheer and gasp. He directs his horse with a series of grunts and groans rather than commands, which seems strange until he smiles widely at the crowd, displaying a tongue cut at its root. This rider's name is Thelred (see **Part Four - She Sees, She Knows** for a complete character description). He comes from the land of Rohan to the south; any player-hero with the *Folk-lore* Trait may recognise this.

Terry's Menagerie

Two carts filled with small wooden cages display various animals: stoats, a litter of field-hares, a tailless fox, and several varieties of tortoise and snake. A large thrush, dark brown with a yellow-speckled breast and belly, flitters in an iron cage, singing sweetly. Children crowd about the cages, gawking and carrying on loudly. A dark-haired Hobbit from Archet by the name of Terry Banks uses his wide-brimmed hat to collect offers.

If a companion with the *Beast-lore* Trait or an Elf approaches the bird, his song takes on a livelier tone. It repeats the same cry, and heroes spending a point of Hope discover they may understand what it says: "Set me free, and I shall serve you faithfully for one year." The bird understands what is said to him in the Common speech, and speaks the tongues of crows and eagles. If the heroes get interested, Terry senses something strange afoot, and attempts to get as much as possible from the purchase, asking the outrageous sum of 2 gold pieces for the bird (2 Treasure!). On a successful **Persuade** test, his price can be bartered down to 1 gold piece.

The thrush will serve his new owner for one year, or more if a bond of friendship is developed. The bird flies at an

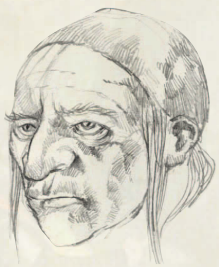
average speed of 20 miles per hour, up to a maximum of 100 miles per day. It cannot carry any items over long distances.

The Wose

A very unusual creature sits still in a cage, different from anything the companions have seem before. It is a short-legged, squat shape of a man, almost completely naked but for a leather cloth about his waist. He stares straight ahead, with dark, unflinching and unblinking eyes, set deep in a flat face. Several children attempt to break his reverie by poking and tossing small items at him, as his keeper, Morton, a squint-eyed Man of Bree, laughs and addresses loudly any passers-by, inviting them to come see "the man-eating Wild Man of the South".

This man is a Wose, a Wild Man of the Woods. He is treated like a beast by his keeper, cruel Morton, and will not communicate from inside the cage whatsoever (but will aid the company if freed: see **Freeing the Captives** on page 83).

Osbert the Woodturner



An old-looking man with a curved back works a strange contraption outside his cart. His name is Osbert, and he sits operating a foot-pedal attached by a rope to a pole hung high overhead. The moving rope turns a spindle in front of the craftsman, and attached to the spindle is a piece of wood. The man uses a sharp tool, similar to a knife, to shape the rotating piece of wood. In just a few minutes and the application of several skilful strokes, the craftsman has fashioned a long handle for a smithing hammer. This is carried inside the cart by a girl of no more than 10 years, where other spun wood items are displayed.

A *Rich* or *Prosperous* player-hero can commission the craftsman to make a tool that requires a pole – a walking staff, a fishing spear, a hammer haft, and so on. (the man is no weaponsmith). The item will take the better part of the day to fashion, requiring the companion to return to pick it up before nightfall, as the caravan leaves at dawn. The item gives the owner a bonus of +1 to all rolls made using an appropriate skill (**Travel**, **Hunting**, **Craft** or similar); the bonus is applied until the hero acquires a new level in the modified skill: when this happens, the bonus is lost.

Larry's Fireworks

A bright-eyed old man from Combe named Larry Appledore sits on a stool beneath a tarpaulin rigged to the roof of a cart. Wooden boxes, barrels and crates sit around him filled with strange tubes and parcels wrapped in paper. Only a few folk pass by his cart, pausing briefly before moving on with worried or suspicious expressions on their faces.

Any Hobbit, Barding, Man of the Lake or Dwarf, or even anyone with the *Folk-lore* Trait, will know the tubes and parcels are in fact fireworks. Interested companions may purchase enough fireworks for one use at 1 Treasure point. The effects of fireworks are left to the Loremaster's discretion, but they might well serve as a distraction in combat or fulfilling the requirements of an adversary's *Fear of Fire* for a round.

Larry is a friend of Gandalf. He owes his business to the old conjurer, who taught him a trick or two about the manufacturing of fireworks. Unbeknownst to Larry, he is a valuable source of information for the Grey Wizard, who likes to chat with him in front of a pint from time to time.

Larry has joined the Company of the Wain only recently, and does not suspect anything. He hasn't seen Gandalf since he joined the caravan, so the old Wizard does not know he is there.

Wilma's Furs

Wilma is a sunburnt lady in her forties who has wandered across Eriador all her life. She claims to sell genuine furs she bought from the "Snow-folk of the Northern Wastes". Coats both short and long, boots, hats and mittens are displayed. A young boy, possibly her son, is

dressed in a full set as a walking display. His costume looks to be keeping him exceedingly warm, to his chagrin.

A player-hero can be fully outfitted for 2 Gold pieces (2 Treasure points). Wilma's furs reduce the Encumbrance of a hero's winter travelling gear by 1 point (Encumbrance rating of 2 instead of 3) but make the companion look so outlandish that the difficulty of any roll he makes during an encounter is raised by one level (TN +1).

Lodin the Toymaker

This cart is filled with toys that would make any child giggle with delight. There are wooden horses, tin soldiers and straw dolls, all painted colourfully. However, the fellow that occupies the cart seems ill-fitting to be a toymaker. Lodin, a craftsman from Lake-town, is dour and gruff, and unpleasant to any who bother him. He travels alone, as he was forced to leave his family in Esgaroth on a matter of debts.

The Adventure Begins

The adventure begins when the heroes visit the Company of the Wain for the first time. The caravan can be met anywhere along the Greenway, headed north for Bree, or south for the Crossing of Tharbad (Loremaster's choice). The companions might just stumble upon it by chance during one of their journeys across Eriador, or they may have heard something about the travelling fair from other wanderers and decided to find out what it is all about.

The Wain Ring

The caravan has just mustered in the proximity of a village or farmhouse, and the traders are busy setting up their camp and the various distractions and entertainments. The wagons, approximately a dozen, are set in a large circle. The folk of the settlement begin perusing the offered wares, some returning with exotic goods, but all returning with tales of sights and spectacles not often seen in Eriador.

The Loremaster should let the companions explore the caravan freely, referring to the description of the Company of the Wain and its denizens offered in this same chapter. The interaction with the various Loremaster characters should be enough to take a good part of a gaming session, and a full day for the heroes.

The Company does not offer lodging for the night, so the adventurers will probably look for a place to sleep in the immediate surroundings. It is very convenient to set up camp close to the ring of wagons.

The Bound Man

The morning after their first visit, one companion awakens to see figures shrouded in the mists bustling about the wains, preparing the caravan for departure. Many wagons are already slowly making their way to the road. A break in the tumbling fog reveals a strange sight – a figure, hands bound and head covered completely in a burlap sack, is moved from one wagon to another.

Almost immediately thereafter, the last wagon begins moving to reach the Greenway.

- Part Two -
Investigating the Caravan

There are several reasons why the companions might choose to know more about the caravan. They will probably want to investigate the fate of the bound man, but they might be worried about the caged Wose, or even care for the mistreated bear (especially if there is a Beorning in the group).

What they can choose to do is to follow the caravan, to eventually *infiltrate* or even *attack it*. Eventually, the Loremaster will further the plot by proceeding to the **The Captive is Handed Over** on page 84.

Following the Caravan

Whatever their objective, the heroes may choose to follow the caravan *openly* or *covertly*.

Following Openly

If they choose to follow openly the player-heroes will be unmolested, but the the caravan's defences will immediately be considered to be alert for the purpose of attacking or *infiltrating it* (see below).

Following Covertly

If they choose to follow covertly, each member of the company must take a **Stealth** test each day to avoid detection. The difficulty is TN 14, but it raises by one level with every day of pursuit (TN +2). All heroes must succeed in their roll for the group to remain undetected. A character who obtains a great success on his roll can assist another character who failed his own roll, or two characters on an extraordinary success. If any hero fails his roll and is not helped by another companion, apply the rules for following the caravan openly.

Infiltrating the Caravan

Infiltrating the caravan unnoticed requires all infiltrating companions to pass a **Stealth** test at TN 16 during the day and TN 14 at night. If the caravan is alert (see *Following the Caravan* above) the difficulty is raised by one level (TN +2). Also in this case, a hero who obtains a great success on his roll can assist another character who failed his own roll, or two characters on an extraordinary success. If the company fails to enter the caravan while undetected, the guards on duty intervene (see **Attacking the Caravan** below).

If the heroes penetrate the camp successfully, they can spy on the wagons and their occupants, or attempt to free the Wose or the bear. The Loremaster may ask for further tests, should the heroes take actions that run the risk of being discovered (for example, freeing the captives). The information gathered during this investigation is left to the Loremaster, based on the description of the caravan given at page 77.

Freeing the Captives

The companions might want to free the Wild Man or the caged bear because they have been moved to pity, or maybe because they are need information (from the Wild Man) or need a distraction (by unleashing the bear on the caravan).

Both captives' cages are locked: opening them require a **Craft** test. Getting to the respective cages unnoticed requires **Stealth**.

If the Wose is freed, he will follow the player-heroes and pledge to serve the company for a while (see the boxout opposite).

If the bear is freed, the companions have only a few moments to get away from the cage before the animal leaves it. At this point, the tormented creature will roar savagely at any person standing between it and its freedom, and then trample them. If the companions stay clear of its path, the bear will probably destroy Caradog's wain, before it makes a beeline for the closest woods.

The Wose

The Wild Man was given two years ago to Uathach as a gift from the White Wizard himself, to be put on show as an attraction. He has spent every day since that time in fetters. He hasn't uttered a word since that day, and interacted minimally with his captors or the audience he was presented to.

He is grateful to anyone who frees him, but his suspicion of any Man prevents him from speaking or giving his name to anyone. If presented with gifts, he refuses, showing no interest in clothing, weapons or treasure of any sort. He will gladly accept food. He communicates with gestures, and the companions require a roll of Riddle to understand complicated information (for example, the habits of the members of the Company of the Wain, or the number of guards they have, or the Wild Man's origins). He knows he was captured by servants of Saruman, but he is too afraid of the Wizard's sorcery to even think of revealing such information.

If invited to remain with the companions, he stays for thirty days, less the total amount of Shadow points among all the heroes. As long as the Wild Man is in the company, all heroes roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when making Awareness, Explore or Hunting rolls. Additionally, the Wild Man alerts the company automatically of the presence of Orcs, being able to scent them from a day away – when this happens, he speaks, shouting a single word as a warning: "Gorgûn!".

Attacking the Caravan

There are at least two dozens fighting men among the members of the Company of the Wain, so it is rather

unlikely that the heroes will ever consider attacking it. Not to mention the moral implications of such an aggression against a group mostly composed of innocent traders...

During the day, calls for alarm are carried through the caravan quickly, causing it to stop soon after. At night, the caravan camps by arranging the wagons in a ring, using them as a fortification. The merchants camp inside, bringing in all the horses and mules and building a large fire. Attackers from outside the ring are not allowed to make preliminary rolls of **Battle** to gain bonus Success dice, as the terrain is at their disadvantage.

Setting fire to the wagons is impractical as they are not easily set aflame and any fires that are started are quickly put out.

In the case of any attack, every able-bodied man arms himself readily and rushes to the battle in a few instants, arriving in successive waves of two or three armed men every two rounds of combat (twice as much if the caravan is alert, see **Following the Caravan** above). If the threat is an organised group (such a company of heroes!) the defenders will instead assemble first, and then rush the attackers.

Armed Men of the Company of the Wain:

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
12	2
Parry	Armour
3	1d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Spear or Bow	2
Dagger	1
Special Abilities	
-	-

The Captive is Handed Over

A couple of days after the company encountered the caravan the traders stop for the evening and make camp just before dusk (the Loremaster chooses the precise location, based on whether the Company was travelling north or south). Soon after, two riders leading a third horse arrive at the camp. They are both black-haired and wear travelling clothes of mud-spattered leather, and they stay for the evening, guests of Uathach.

Should the company wish to investigate more closely, they may learn the riders are Men from Dunland. They look to be of the capable sort, and both carry weapons. One carries an axe with a long haft, the other a long spear.

If unmolested, the two Dunlendings leave the camp at dawn, tossing the bound man over the third horse, and depart at the same time as the caravan. The men ride south with haste. Should the company wish to follow them, they will find themselves quickly outdistanced, unless they are on horseback themselves.

If the companions wish to follow them on foot, they must travel through the night, hoping that the two riders won't do the same. Every companion must make an **Athletics** test: on a success the hero's Fatigue rating goes up one point, two points on a failure, and remains unchanged on a great or extraordinary success.

The Dunlendings

Whether on horseback or by forced march, a pursuing company catches up with the riders just before the following dawn. They see three bodies lying wrapped in bedrolls; it is not possible to distinguish which is the bound man. If the companions wish to attack and succeed in taking the Dunlendings by surprise they are unable to don their armour, and use the value in parentheses.

The Dunlendings are canny, hardened warriors. They make their way to the horses, and use them as cover against both ranged and close combat attacks. Accordingly, any attacker is considered *moderately hindered* (+2 TN).

Should the riders be reduced to 1 Hate point between them or less, they will offer they company a bag of Dwarven silver coins worth 3 Treasure points in exchange for their

lives. If the company accepts the bag and leaves the bound man to the riders, this counts as a Misdeed (worth 3 Shadow points). Should both riders' Endurance fall to less than 5 or should either suffer a Wound, they will attempt to mount their horses and flee, leaving the bound man entirely. They won't let themselves be captured alive.

Dunlending Warriors:

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
16	4
Parry	Armour
5	2d (1d)
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Long-hafted Axe (#1) and Long Spear (#2)	3
Dagger	1
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	-

Who is the Bound Man?

If the company is able to drive off or kill the riders, they may free the bound man. It is Larry Appledore, the fireworks vendor from Combe. He is extremely relieved to have been saved from "those ruffians", but he really cannot explain why he was kidnapped in the first place! He isn't rich, nor does he know anyone who could pay a ransom for his life. He doesn't know even where the Dunlendings were headed.

If the companions cannot make head or tail of the reason why the Dunlendings had an interest in Larry, a **Riddle** roll may uncover his friendship with Gandalf, an association he might have been too liberal in telling the people of the caravan about...

- Part Three - False Accusations

This part of the adventure is written assuming that the heroes are again on the trail of the Company of the Wain, and that they didn't attack or confronted directly any of its members – if they did, you may need to adapt the next part or skip ahead entirely. The caravan is met in a different location along the Greenway, as the traders set up their wares and once more the smallfolk come out to be entertained and swindled. However, there is a different air about the caravan this time. The merchants seem more hesitant and less carefree than they were previously, scowling at the company and demanding ridiculous sums if asked about their merchandise.

The Town of Road's End

The Loremaster can set this part of the adventure at any farmstead or village along the Greenway. The adventure proposes Road's End, a village that can be placed exactly where it suits best the narration of the Loremaster, any place along the path of the Company of the Wain. Its location (and name!) is most suited to the point were the Greenway forks, to continue north towards Bree, and north-west, towards Sarn Ford.

The village is composed of a dozen of buildings, clustered around a larger and crumbling mansion of ancient foundation, possibly once a waystation built to serve a forgotten kingdom. A wide, partially overgrown clearing, the remnant of what was once the town's market square, serves travelling caravans well to make camp.

The inhabitants of Road's End are not more than a couple hundred individuals, among those living in the village itself, and in other farms in the vicinity. While most villagers are simple farmers, the trade along the Greenway has attracted some of the rougher types that can be found in Eriador: bandits, thugs and assorted ruffians. Rangers of the North sometimes mingle among them, to spy the Enemy from within and to single out the most dangerous individuals (to later deal with them).

The alderman of Road's End is an old cutthroat called Morsad. Originally from Tharbad, Morsad has left his life of wrongdoing, but has used his previous career

(and friends!) to win a position of influence in the small community. His friendship with Uathach has helped too, together with the gold he received from Isengard.

Brigands!

Should the company stay near or in the settlement for the night, they find themselves awakened by a sizeable group of local men.

Armed Villagers:

Attribute Level	
3	
Endurance	**Hate**
10	1
Parry	**Armour**
3	1d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 2
Movement, 1	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Sword, Spear or Bow	2,1,3
Dagger	1
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	–

There must be at least twenty armed fellows, bearing weapons of various provenances, from old, rusty swords and knives, to farm implements of various sizes; some carry hunting bows strung with an arrow nocked. The group is led by a threatening fellow, a white-bearded old man with the look of a crazed hermit, called Morsad.

In the name of the population of Road's End, Morsad addresses the companions and informs them that a traveller has made accusations of brigandry against them. The company is severely outnumbered and asked to leave their weapons where they lie and come with them to resolve the matter. If they want to avoid a bloodbath, the heroes will have to surrender...

Prisoners

The companions are held in a barn. No ways of escaping are visible, and it seems that the heroes will have to wait this out.

Shortly after dawn, the men of Morsad return. They bind the heroes' hands and take the company to a stand of trees, where a folk-moot is going to be held. All the inhabitants of Road's End trickle in, to watch the show.

A wounded man is then brought out stretched on a board carried by several local men. It's an ill-favoured fellow with a grimy face, who holds his left arm tied up in a

bloodied bandage. The companions have never seen him before. He is their accuser.

The Folk-moot

The folk-moot is set up to frame the companions, so its proceeding won't have much to do with justice. The accuser, Idderig, is a man in Uathach's payroll, and Morsad, the alderman, is an agent of Saruman, placed in Road's End to assist Uathach in her missions. But there is hope, as the doom of the folk-moot will be pronounced by the assembled villagers, and the companions will have their chance to influence their judgement and convince them of their innocence.

Setting Tolerance

The Tolerance rating for this encounter is based on Wisdom, as the earnest villagers respect measured words more than brawn or skill with weapons. The following modifiers apply:

- Elves are a very unusual encounter here: if any Elf is in the company, the Tolerance is reduced by 1.
- Hobbits and Dwarves are considered forthright folk: if any are present, add 1 to Tolerance.
- If the company fought or resisted in the course of being detained, subtract 2 from Tolerance. If they wounded or killed anyone, Tolerance is reduced by 3 instead.

Introduction

As the heroes wait in chains, Morsad opens the folk-moot, announcing the reason for the assembly. He introduces Idderig, the accuser, a wanderer from Rhudaur who has asked for justice against the company of brigands that wounded him.

When he is given permission to speak, Idderig presents himself as a simple itinerant tinker. The alderman asks anyone in the folk-moot to give their pledge that they know the tinker, several of the assembled raise their hand, nodding.

The alderman then asks the "headman" of the company to introduce his companions and state their business on the Greenway.

Interaction

Morsad asks Idderig to tell his tale. The tinker claims he was ambushed by the company, and wounded in his escape attempt. For proper storytelling, the Loremaster should ensure Idderig's tale is consistent with details about the company that Uathach might have gathered since the heroes have started showing an interest in the caravan. If at all possible, Idderig could even exhibit some token previously stolen from the companions by one of Uathach's servants.

Then it is the turn of the companions to defend themselves. They are allowed to counter the accusations of Idderig: the player can lead his defence in the way he prefers, proposing appropriate skill tasks. If the companion addresses Idderig directly, any particularly successful roll leads him to blubber incoherently, while failures have him deny convincingly.

If the company attacked the local men while being apprehended, they must now also defend their actions. If they wounded anyone, the difficulty of any roll is equal to TN 16. If they killed someone, it is equal to TN 18.

The Loremaster should play out the exchange under the normal rules for encounters. The folk-moot ends either when the company has run out of things to say, or when they exceed the Tolerance of the encounter, at which point the elder has heard enough and nothing more will convince him any further.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome by keeping track of how many successful rolls were achieved by the companions.

1: The elder pronounces his doom. The companions are found guilty of wounding a free man, and are requested to pay a weregild of 60 silver pennies (3 Treasure points). In this case, proceed immediately to **A Dark Dawn** on page 88.

2-4: The alderman declares that he "senses something sinister upon you", and informs the companions that they are free to go, but also that they are never to return to Road's End. They will be escorted to the Greenway,

whereupon their weapons will be returned. This way, they won't have a chance to question Idderig (see below).

5-6: The doom of the tinker is apparent to the assembled villagers, and the alderman cannot choose but to pronounce it: Idderig has accused the companions falsely, and is to be taken to the nearest crossroads and left there, not to return to the settlement on pain of death. Morsad reluctantly apologises to the company and orders their weapons to be returned to them.

7+: The company is recognised as being victims of a false testimony; the villagers sympathise with them. They are cheered, and given shelter and food for one day. Idderig is chased away as for the previous entry.

Questioning Idderig

Even if they are recognised to be innocent, the companions will be prohibited to follow Idderig to the crossroads. If they try to find him later, he can be tracked with a **Hunting** roll. He will be on the run towards the south, and wary of the player-heroes looking for him. Idderig will attempt to hide but a successful **Search** roll will reveal him. He will not fight but will immediately begin grovelling for mercy.

Much can be gained in the questioning of the wretch, as he knows the identity of she who hired him to accuse the companions: Uathach of Tharbad. But Idderig is a very good liar, and the difficulty of any roll to interrogate him is set at TN 18. He will also build a believable castle of falsehoods, if the rolls made by the company to interrogate him fail (or produce results).

A Dark Dawn

If the companions failed to demonstrate their innocence at the folk-moot, they will be kept in the barn overnight, and the following dawn one of them will be allowed to go and fetch the money needed to pay the due weregild.

But before that happens, Idderig will set the barn ablaze. A companion with an appropriate Trait (*Wary*, *Smoking*, or similar) will notice the fire in time. If they cry for help, their guards will open the door of the barn and attempt to restrain them while also putting out the fire. This is a good time to attack or flee, should the companions wish to do so.

Until the company retrieves their weapons, the brawling rules (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 175) apply. There is one armed guard for every two unarmed companions. If they defeat the guards, recovering their gear will be easy: it is kept in another barn nearby.

- Part Four -
She Sees, She Knows

By now, Uathach of Tharbad certainly knows about the suspicions of the companions and their interest in her dealings. She has informed her master about it, and she is ready to take extreme measures to protect herself and her mission.

What follows detail some of the actions that Uathach might undertake to convince the companions that they are being exceedingly nosy. The material can be used by the Loremaster in the way he deems fit, to conform with how the adventure has gone so far.

A Lone Rider

Uathach may send Thelred of Rohan to hound the company and keep a watch on their whereabouts. The mute is Uathach's minion of choice, as he does not run the risk of divulging her secrets.

With appropriate rolls the heroes soon may find they are followed by a single rider. Thelred stays well out of bowshot, and handles his horse adeptly, always ready to ride away should they pursue. He tries to disguise his features under a long scarf, but a *Keen-eyed* hero, or anyone succeeding in an **Awareness** roll may recognise him if they have a chance to get a good look at him.

If the heroes are perceived as a threat by Uathach, Thelred will attempt to harm them when a chance offers itself, possibly singling out one companion and attacking him by surprise. He will silently approach his victim, throw a spear at the unfortunate, and then jump on his horse to escape. He will probably attempt this at dusk, as the companions are setting up camp.

If caught, Thelred fights to the death.

Thelred, Renegade Rider of Rohan:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
15	5
Parry	Armour
6	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Sword	3
(Spears)	3*
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	-

*Thelred's spears have been smeared with a poison concocted by Áinfean, and given him by Uathach. A character hit by a spear falls to the ground convulsing and frothing after a number of rounds equal to his Body rating (in addition to suffering from the normal effects of being Poisoned – see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 130).

A Regiments of Crows

Uathach has sent word of the troublesome company to Saruman, who has sent a regiment of crebain, the birds of Dunland, to spy over them. The company notices a kind of crow of large size watching them from a branch. This bird does not follow, it simply watches as they pass. Some time later, the companions spot another crow, or maybe the same one, perched upon a rock.

This sighting occurs regularly, several times each day. Should the heroes attempt to kill the bird, it simply flies away before the companions can get a clear shot at it.

When the company has gotten used to the presence of the dark bird, the crebain strike. As soon as one or more companions engage in a potentially dangerous activity, like scaling a cliffside or traversing a swift-moving stream, a full murder of crebain swoop upon the endangered companions, worsening their predicament. The targeted heroes must pass a test of **Athletics** to avoid plummeting to the ground or falling into the waters (see page 184 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* for the rules for falling, drowning and fire damage).

A Weariness of the Heart

Saruman does not necessarily need murderous servants or wicked birds to hinder the companions or further his plans.

His arm is growing long, and he is always learning new ways to exert his power. If the actions of the companions worry him, the will of the White Wizard can become like an unseen barrier, set before the companions and obstructing them in their progress: when this happens, each companion is considered to be temporarily Weary.

– Part Five –
When Dark Things...

The companions are not the only ones who are keeping an eye on the Company of the Wain. A group of Rangers of the North normally set on guard upon Sarn Ford are becoming interested, especially since the companions have started taking a look.

The Loremaster must determine the best way to introduce the Rangers to the company, based on the current circumstances. A few suggestions include:

- The Rangers show up one night at the company's camp. They basically 'ambush' them to keep their presence a secret from prying eyes, but they make sure to avoid any bloodshed.

- If the player-heroes spared Idderig, the Rangers capture him later and learn about the company and their suspicions. They deliver a message to the companions, asking them to meet in an isolated location.

- If the company performed well while on trial in Road's End (see page 85), they have been noticed by the Rangers disguised in the village and assessed as potential allies.

Once the company meets the Rangers, they soon make the acquaintance of Randír, their captain. Randír leads a group of eight Dúnedain warriors, normally set to watch upon the crossing at Sarn Ford, to the north. He is very curious about the involvement of the companions with the Company of the Wain, and he will hear their testimony with extreme attention.

Randír is an *Elf-friend*, so he will instinctively trust any Elven companion, and naturally another fellow Ranger of the North.

Foreshadowing

The Loremaster might like to use the encounter with Randír to introduce other Ranger characters who will be featured in future scenarios, such as Hiraval (see page 92), Cirion (see page 111), or even a new Ranger player-hero.

Dealing with the Spies

When the companions are done telling Randír all they know, or at least what they want him to know, the Dúnadan captain tells them that the matter is now in their hands, should they wish to continue to further adventures.

Should they insist on dealing personally with the Company of the Wain, Randír will then offer his support and that of

his men, and is available to give advice on the possible courses of action.

There are several possibilities, based on what the companions have learnt about the Company of the Wain:

Let the Company Be

Unsure about the right thing to do, the companions choose to wait and see. The Rangers will watch over the caravan, and keep the player-heroes informed, should they ask for it.

If this is the chosen course of action, the Loremaster can close the current Adventuring phase; the heroes will certainly encounter the Company of the Wain again, as Uathach will become a 'recurring villain' in their campaign.

Deal directly with Uathach

If the heroes have singled out the 'blind' seer as the protagonist of the dark scheme, they may attempt to kidnap her, or worse. This will need a well-organised plan, as Uathach has several servitors to protect her, and is well respected by all members of the Company of the Wain.

The Loremaster should refer to the description of the caravan and its members to play out this development of the adventure. Randír and his men will propose to ambush the caravan at an appropriate location, to let the companions break into Uathach's wagon to confront her or take her away.

Fellowship Phase

The Adventuring phase will reach its conclusion when the player-heroes have dealt with Uathach once and for all, or when they decide they need to know more about the dealings of the Company of the Wain before they can act.

To this end, the companions may want to hear some valuable advice during the following Fellowship phase, especially if they have someone among their patrons that is accounted among the Wise and powerful...

The Companions Confer with Saruman

If the White Wizard is suspected to have something to do with the Company of the Wain, he might be confronted by the companions with proof of his involvement. Naturally, Saruman will deny everything: the Loremaster should find a plausible explanation or alibi for any and all accusations moved against the Head of the White Council; he is not easily cornered.

If Saruman happens to be a patron of the company of heroes, he will find it even easier to hide his tracks: he will provide the player-heroes with some 'insider information' capable of putting the blame on others, perhaps even Gandalf himself. However, Saruman will easily sacrifice his minions to clear his name of any allegation, Uathach included.

The Companions Confer with Gandalf

If the heroes go to the Grey Pilgrim for advice, Gandalf will hear patiently what they have to say. His reaction will depend on the information gathered so far, but in general terms the Wizard will tend to underestimate any proof of the involvement of the head of his order, Saruman. Gandalf has had disagreements with the White Wizard before, but at this time he has nothing but respect for his supposedly greater wisdom...

Investigating Further

Of course, the player-heroes may not be satisfied that the threat to Eriador is at an end, even if they have dealt with Uathach or consulted with the Wise. The presence of Dunlendings and an outcast from the Rohirrim, not to mention suspicions of Isengard's involvement, might draw them south, into the lands of *The Horse-lords of Rohan*... But that, as they say, is for a future supplement.

What lies - Beneath -

- **When** The company may undertake this adventure at any time between 2954 and 2977. The journey is of a significant length so it would be prudent to begin it in spring or early summer.

- **Where:** The adventure begins at Rivendell and then leads west across the great East Road to the Weather Hills, north of Amon Sûl, and the ruins of a secret manor in ancient Arthedain.

- **What:** Hiraval, a Ranger of the North, has set upon a difficult undertaking: to reclaim his family's ancient mansion. Its ruins seem to have recently become the refuge of a number of brigands, and he has need of allies to accompany him.

- **Why:** The Ranger believes that the ancestral mansion could serve well as a base of operations for the Dúnedain north of Weathertop. Securing it would make travelling in Eriador safer for everyone.

- **Who:** Hiraval is the main Loremaster character of this adventure. He was a proud and noble Ranger of the North, but the spirit of an ancestor has haunted him for many years, and the spectre is slowly driving him towards madness.

Adventuring Phase

The adventure sets out as a journey across the rugged lands that lie between Rivendell and the Weather Hills. After this, the player-heroes will encounter the group of 'bandits' that have made the old manor their home and base of operations. The final part of the adventure relates to the far more terrifying prospect of dealing with the Spectre Húldrahir.

Part One - In Rivendell Where Elves Yet Dwell

Wherein it is established why the characters are in Rivendell and introduces them to Elrond and Hiraval.

Part Two - The Journey West

Here the company leaves Rivendell, travelling west through the harsh landscape of the Trollshaws and on to Weathertop, where they meet with a patrol of Rangers.

Part Three - The Secret Manor

The company make their way north through the Weather Hills to the ruins of a manor built at the time of the kingdom of Arthedain, and find it occupied by a peculiar sort of individuals.

Húldrahir the Spectre

Húldrahir is an ancestor of Hiraval, the Ranger. Once the head of a noble house of the Dúnedain of Arthedain, Húldrahir was so prideful that he believed he could discover the secrets of the Witch-king and use them against him. Tragically, he was wrong and he fell facing the Lord of the Nazgûl, leaving his mortal remains cursed and trapped in an unquiet sleep. His manor followed his fate, and the house has lain in ruins ever since.

A few years ago, Hiraval, a descendant of Húldrahir, returned to his family's mansion, searching for answers to the many mysteries surrounding his family. The arrival of a man of his own blood roused Húldrahir from his centuries of rest, and the Spectre started to gnaw at Hiraval's mind, tainting his dreams with visions of fear and torment.

Eventually, Hiraval left his ancestral home as a man haunted by nightmares, but before he could fully succumb to the Shadow. He wandered long in the exercise of his duties as a Ranger, but the desire of reclaiming his family's mansion has become an obsession he can barely contain.

Part Four - A Night of Treachery and Madness

The Spectre Húldrahir reaches out to corrupt the hearts of those who dwell in the ruins of the manor. The result will be murder and treachery, and the companions will be hard pressed to avoid the tragic end of a once noble bloodline born out of Westernesse.

Epilogue - Húldrahir Defeated

Wherein the companions reap the fruit of their efforts, or mourn the tragic events they witnessed.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules found within *Rivendell*, any revelation episodes during this adventure are likely to relate to the strain put on Hiraval's mind by the Shadow, or to Húldrahir's growing power. The Ranger might turn on the company by subtle means, unwittingly boycotting their actions, or by pushing them to choose always the most reckless or rash course of action. Since the adventure as written already presents a similar development, the Loremaster should worsen each episode accordingly.

- Part One - In Rivendell Where Elves Yet Dwell

The adventure begins in Rivendell, the Last Homely House. One evening, while the companions have settled in the Hall of Fire, telling tales of adventures past and singing songs about heroes of old, Master Elrond invites them to meet him in the eastern porch.

Helping a Ranger

The eastern porch opens on the moonlit gardens of Imladris. White stone-marked paths lead out among the pine trees, and the river cuts a sparkling ribbon through the valley below. The company linger for a moment, taking in the wondrous view, before they realise that Master Elrond is sitting in a high-backed chair, his eyes glittering in the dark. Someone else sits to his left, wrapped in a dark cloak.

"Welcome! I have an important matter to discuss with you." Master Elrond begins, "A Ranger of the North needs help in an important task. This is Hiraval, son of Hirgeleb."

Hiraval stands to greet the companions with a curt bow. He removes his hood, to reveal a chiselled face that shows the many years he has spent on the road. His coal-black hair and beard are shot through with a few silver strands.

Playing Hiraval

Hiraval was once a proud and generous Ranger, but his mind is breaking under the strain put on him by his unquiet dead ancestor. He is still sane when he meets the companions in Rivendell, but a darker nature is emerging, replacing his generosity with bitterness, changing his pride into arrogance and turning his courage to overconfidence. He is in control of his deeds, but his goals are not entirely his own any more.

During the first meeting, the Ranger plays it safe. He knows that asking the heroes to accompany him is his only chance to have his mission be given Elrond's blessing, so he is hardly in a position to be picky. This notwithstanding, the Ranger will try to assess the companions' strengths and weaknesses, by observing the way they behave and judging their replies to his questions. He wants to figure out what they are made of, as he is in need of help, but does not want unexpected trouble from any of them, should they at any moment refuse to do what he wants them to do...

When playing Hiraval during the adventure, the Loremaster should remember to have him react with anger to any unexpected news, especially that concerning the brigands occupying the ruins of his family's land, and with impatience to any other event threatening to delay his mission.

Can the companions detect a hint of over-eagerness whenever he talks of reclaiming his family's manor? A touch of resentment when he speaks about those he is supposed to protect? A successful Insight skill roll suggests there is.

Set Tolerance

The meeting with Hiraval follows the standard format for Encounters. The Ranger has no respect for anything but courage and determination, so the initial Tolerance is set equal to the highest Valour from amongst the companions. If the companions fail a number of rolls greater than their Tolerance, Hiraval has made up his mind on them all, for good or for ill.

Introduction

Using **Awe** to introduce themselves is the best course of action here, as the Ranger is impatient, and eager to depart (the difficulty for such rolls is lowered to TN 12).

Interaction

Hiraval begins by explaining his plans and asking each character a pointed question. These questions should let the players propose skill rolls, useful to evaluate the Encounter's final outcome. Hiraval's speech begins thus:

"Elrond has told me something about you and praised your deeds. He considers you to be worthy warriors, fighting to protect those who are heedless. I come to you today with a mission of the utmost importance. There is a manor, in the Weather Hills north of Weathertop, where my family dwelt of old. Mere ruins remain today, haunted by craven brigands who dared defile its stones.

"Long have my kin protected Eriador, the land we once ruled as kings. If I were to reclaim my family's estate, our guard would be renewed and allowed to continue. I seek allies in this quest, men who would not fear to tread a path fraught with danger."

Hiraval then asks each companion in turn a question. Examples of such questions are as follows:

"What is most important to you in life?"
"Tell me about your greatest victory."
"Is it better to be feared or loved by those who you guard?"
"What one mistake in your life would you change?"
"What would you be willing to sacrifice your wealth and loved ones for?"

Players should be asked by the Loremaster whether they are answering truthfully or not as such lies may well be noted by Master Elrond who observes these discussions (although the master of Imladris offers counsel only when asked directly). When all the companions have answered, Hiraval asks them if they now have any questions for him. Some questions the companions may likely ask are listed below along with the Ranger's response.

Why do you not seek to involve others of your kin in this expedition?
"Our numbers are few and spread thin across these lands, though our mission has not diminished in need or importance. We seek allies in our efforts against the Enemy."

What can you tell us of your family's lands?
"My family lands lie within a day's ride to the north of Weathertop, nestled within the Weather Hills. Our manor provided the watchtower at Amon Sûl with supplies and men. Now, my ancestral home is but a shadow of itself; all ruined and overgrown."

What do you know of the brigands there?
"There isn't much I need to know. It is a group of miserable wretches without honour, seeking to profit from those who cannot defend themselves in the wild."

Why does this undertaking interests Elrond and Rivendell?
"Long have the Elves assisted my people in our struggles against the Shadow. This mission will give us an advantage against our common foe."

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

The Loremaster can evaluate the outcome of the encounter with Hiraval by keeping track of how many successful rolls were achieved by the companions. Their performance determines the attitude that the Ranger will have towards them in the course of the adventure.

1-3: Hiraval accepts the company of the heroes only because he cannot find another solution, and secretly despises them. Any choices taken by them contrary to his counsel will vex him profoundly. As the adventure progresses, his reactions will worsen, and when his mind finally breaks (see **Breaking Hiraval** on page 106), he won't hesitate in harming the companions, should his goals require him to. His behaviour will at times betray his feelings, as contemptuous remarks will escape his lips.

4-6: Hiraval is generally indifferent to the companions. Their association with him is nothing more than a means to an end. The Ranger will treat the character with little warmth, unless the behaviour of the heroes towards him or his son Edrahil succeed in warming his feelings towards them.

7+: The companions succeeded in impressing what is left in Hiraval that respects valour and the value of friendship. Even if his aims do not change, deep inside himself Hiraval hopes that his quest will have a positive outcome. The Ranger is generally amicable towards the player-heroes and he ends up sharing many thoughts with them about the glorious past of his folk, or about what the future holds for his land and kin. The Loremaster should curb the Ranger's reactions as described in the adventure towards a somewhat more positive edge.

Developing the Relationship with Hiraval

The companions will share a long journey with Hiraval, and will face several threats in the course of the adventure. The Loremaster should take into account what happens during the Adventuring phase and modify accordingly the attitude of Hiraval towards the companions. To do so the Loremaster must keep in mind that the starting point has been set during the encounter in Rivendell, and that the Ranger's disposition towards the adventurers is going to worsen with the passage of time, as Hiraval's sanity slowly degenerates.

Examples of actions that might warm Hiraval towards the heroes include performing a particularly valiant action in combat (but Hiraval is hard to impress) or protecting his son Edrahil, or even treating the young boy as an equal and with respect. On the contrary, putting Edrahil in unnecessary danger will not fail in marring Hiraval's opinion almost beyond the possibility of recovering.

Hiraval the Ranger

Attribute Level: 7
Specialities: Lore of Arnor, Shadow Lore, Smoking.
Distinctive Features: Resentful, Overconfident.
Relevant Skills: Awe ♦♦♦, Travel ♦♦♦, Long Sword ♦♦♦, Bow ♦♦
Endurance: 20

- Part Two -
The Journey West

In the morning, the company meets in Rivendell's Great Hall and sit around the table for a light breakfast. Hiraval joins them, and takes the chance to introduce his 14 year-old son, Edrahil. The young boy strikingly resembles his father, apart from the fair hair of his mother, a Dúnadan woman who died giving birth to the boy.

Edrahil has spent many months training as Hiraval's squire, cleaning the Ranger's supplies, preparing food and treating his master with the deference due to someone not of his blood. He will join his father, and the companions, on the coming adventure.

Edrahil, Son of Hiraval

Attribute Level: 3
Specialities: Beast-lore, Fire-making
Distinctive Features: Energetic, Steadfast
Relevant skills: Song ♦♦, Healing ♦, Courtesy ♦♦, Bow ♦♦♦
Endurance: 12

Playing Edrahil

Edrahil is capable, calm and energetic. He is interested in any Elves or Dwarves in the party and will pepper them with questions about their adventures, hoping one day that he too can stand against the Shadow. If given the opportunity, he will form strong friendships with any Hobbit hero.

The Journey

The adventure assumes that the characters will travel in early summer along the great East Road until they get within sight of Weathertop.

- The journey is 240 miles long. If the companions do not leave the old road, it takes them six days and a single Fatigue test (TN 16) to reach their destination.

From Rivendell to Weathertop

The company travels for three days under the shadow of the Trollshaws. Hiraval warns the companions to be on their guard as Trolls come down from the Ettenmoors in the north and wolves stalk anything on four legs or two who dare venture through these parts. Ancient ruins covered by thick woods recall a time when men ruled these lands.

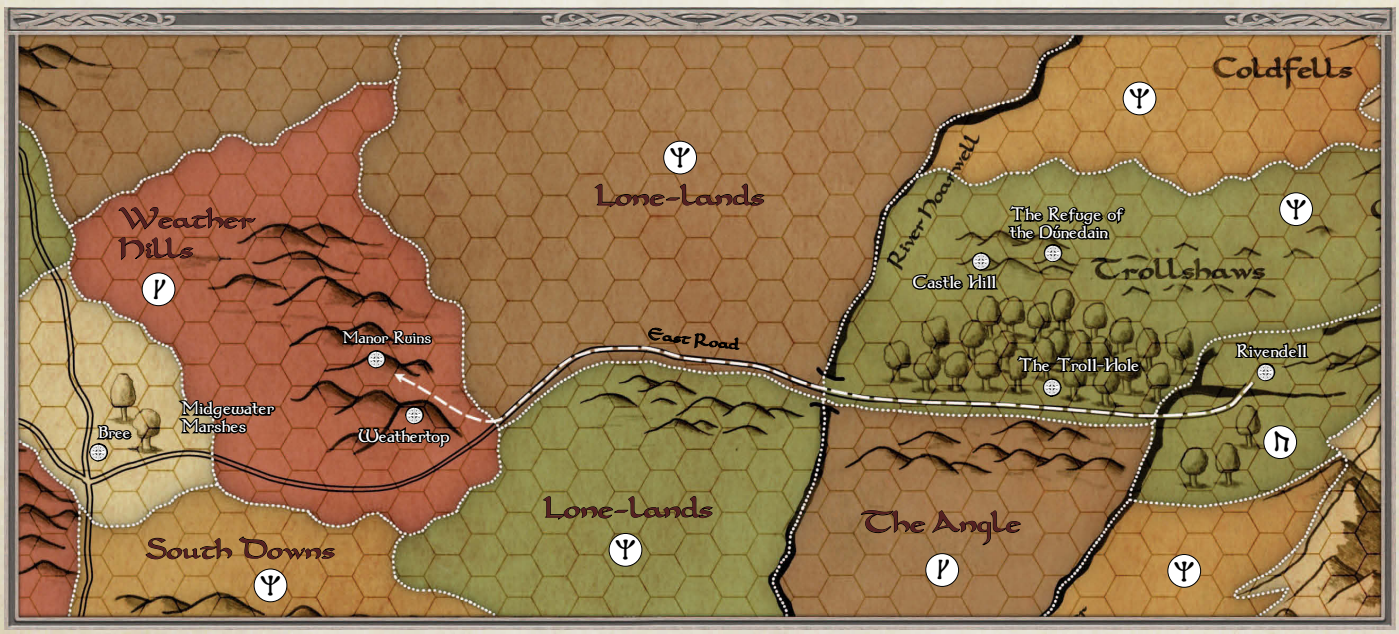
If any of the player-heroes question Hiraval about these lands, the Ranger speaks wistfully of the lost realm of Arnor, and how it fell before the dark power of Angmar.

Edrahil has heard theses stories before, but he is always glad to hear his father talk, something the grim Ranger does less and less with the passing of the months...

Eventually, the company passes the Last Bridge, leaving behind the Trollshaws and entering the Lone-lands crossed by the great East Road heading West.

Hazards Suggestions

The Loremaster may use the following suggestions to set up one or more specific Hazard episodes (see *The One Ring*, page 160), keeping in mind what is relevant to the current terrain. For example, water hazards should be used when the player-heroes are close to a river (either the Loudwater or the Hoarwell).



A Cold, Grey Fog (All Companions – Misery)
A damp fog settles in around the company and the air becomes colder, a bone-deep ghostly chill. All companions must pass a Valour test or be temporarily Miserable for the rest of the journey.

Danger Underfoot (Guide – Wound)
Not all ruins are above ground. The Guide must make a Travel test. If the test fails, he has stumbled into a long-forgotten cellar while choosing the right path to follow. The Guide loses Endurance equal to the roll of a Success die; if an Eye was rolled on the **Travel** test, he takes a Wound instead.

Wolves in the Night (Look-out – Dangerous Meeting)
One of the Look-outs must make an **Awareness** test. If the test fails, the company is surprised when wolves attack their camp at night and cannot roll for Combat Advantages or Opening Volleys as per the normal rules concerning being ambushed. There is a Wild Wolf for each companion, plus a Wolf Leader (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 246).

Little Supper, Less Breakfast, and Wet Clothes all Night (Scout – Dangerous Meeting)
The weather has taken a turn for the worse as the company is caught in a torrential downpour. The Scout must make an **Explore** test as the company abandon the road they were following in seek of shelter. If the test fails, he makes the mistake of leading them to a shelter being used by two wet, hungry Stone-trolls (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 245).

No Food (Huntsman – Weariness)
A bear or some other animal has eaten the company's reserves of food while they slept. The Hunter must make a **Hunting** test to bring in sufficient food for the company. If the test fails, he is temporarily Weary for the length of the journey as he wastes his time on a fruitless hunt.

Travellers in Need

At some point during the journey west and before reaching Weathertop, the company encounters a group of four harried strangers travelling on the great East Road in the opposite direction and whose wagon has broken down. They claim to be travelling blade grinders, offering their services to wanderers and villagers alike, but several mouldy blankets cover their gear and a foul smell emanates from within the covered wain. An **Insight** test (TN 12) indicates that the presence of the company frightens the travellers.

If pressed about their trade, the travellers are evasive. They say they have been robbed by highwaymen several

days out of Bree and to have lost what little coin they had. Unbeknownst to the companions, the filthy blankets cover the travellers' recently deceased mother. If a companion peeks under the blankets, one of the strangers pulls them down abruptly and says, *"Don't disturb mother. She's at her rest now."*

Their suspicious behaviour notwithstanding, the four strangers are a simple folk – maybe not very bright but honest. They are armed with poor weapons for their own defence should the need arise, but they are not aggressive nor are they looking for trouble. What they are trying to do is to fulfil their mother's dying wish to be buried in her ancestral homeland in the hills rising to the south of the East Road, some miles before the Last Bridge. Their journey is a perilous one and it is obvious to the companions that these strangers are ill-equipped for the dangers that lie ahead of them.

The companions must choose whether to help the strangers repair their wagon or to leave them to their own devices.

If the companions choose to help the strangers, their journey will last an additional day and require an additional Fatigue test. But more interesting to them might be Hiraval's reaction to their decision; the Ranger will complain openly that the heroes are only wasting his time, and that delaying their quest will have far worse consequences than what may befall a *"wagon of thoughtless and misguided rovers"*. His task is an important one, he insists, and it is not something to be trifled with.

Should the companion insist on helping the wanderers, Hiraval will stop complaining, but will appear sullen and discontent for a while, only to recover his usual mood a couple of days later, as if nothing happened.

Weathertop in Sight

A couple of days after having left the Last Bridge behind, the East Road turns slightly to the south-west. Eventually, the companions arrive in sight of the Weather Hills, and the highest rise among them, Weathertop.

Upon seeing Amon Sûl outlined against the horizon, Hiraval's chest swells with pride. As the company progresses, the Ranger tells them a little of the history of this place: a tower stood once above Weathertop, built by Elendil, the high king. When Arnor fell, lesser kings fought for the control of the tower, until it was captured by Angmar after long and bitter wars (see also **A History of Eriador**, in *Rivendell*, page 25). But Weathertop is still a place much loved by the Dúnedain of the North, and they keep a watch over it.

Rangers on the Road

When Weathertop is within a half-day's travel, the heroes meet Arbarad, the Warden of Amon Sûl (see *Rivendell*, page 55) travelling with two companions. The Rangers were watching over the great East Road from Weathertop but have now been called away on pressing matters to the south. They are of course kinsmen of Hiraval and any other Dúnedain characters so the encounter is friendly and doesn't require any rolls as information is freely given. However, they will not linger.

On Hiraval's express request, Arbarad has kept watch over his family mansion since when the Ranger left for Rivendell, and can now tell the company that the brigands have not yet left their camp among the ruins. Arbarad additionally provides the player-heroes with the following information:

- There are five brigands camping out in the old ruins to the north of Weathertop.

- As far as Arbarad can tell, the brigands are highwaymen looking for easy coin, but there are heated exchanges within the group; the leader and another often appear to disagree although often the reason for such arguments is not known.

At this point, the Rangers will end the discussion and bid the company farewell; pressing business to the south means that they cannot assist them in dealing with the brigands. Hiraval waits for the Rangers to be out of sight, then complains loudly about the blindness that is preventing his own comrades from seeing what is really important. But one day they will see for themselves that he was not deceived...

- Part Three -
The Secret Manor

The Weather Hills used to mark the border between the realms of Arthedain and Rhudaur of old. Hiraval says that the remains of his manor are a day's march north of Amon Sûl, nestled within a range of windswept hills, crumbling stone walls and broken towers. It is a secret place, difficult to find. Unless you know the way, of course.

The terrain to traverse is rugged and hilly, dotted with thick, hard bushes, stones and rocks, but Hiraval follows the faint tracery of a safer path with surety. The Ranger leads the company across many twists and turns, until the heroes reach a circle of boulders, rising on the edge of a deep cleft running from west to east. *"Welcome to my humble abode,"* says Hiraval.

At first glance, the companions see only the steep walls of the fissure, covered by vegetation, as they descend into the darkness, and hear the gurgling of a slow stream running at its bottom. But suddenly their eyes adjust to the deep shadows of the opening, and they finally see what cannot be seen from any other place in the Weather Hills: against the far wall of the cleft, no more than sixty yards from them, rise the walls of the hidden mansion of Hiraval's family, a manor built entirely against the northern cliffside of the deep valley!

The "Brigands"

The men who occupy the ruins and who Hiraval refers to as 'brigands' are in fact individuals of a more peculiar sort... they are a company of aspiring adventurers! For the moment they are no more than a bunch of young and foolhardy rovers, but they are ambitious, and eager to make a name for themselves.

Their companionship was born in Bree last year, when Elwin met Fay for the first time at the Prancing Pony. Elwin and his men have recently left Bree. They have chosen the ruins of the manor as their current refuge of choice, and always return to them after their exploration of the surrounding countryside. They have never encountered Hiraval and don't know much about the Rangers of the North, as they still suffer from the preconceptions about them they heard tell in Bree. The Rangers consider them to be no more than brigands, as they trust Hiraval's word. The company of Elwin sees Eriador as a region full of opportunities for people who, like them, are willing to put their lives at risk for the sake of adventuring and committing deeds worthy of remembrance.

Unfortunately, the darkness hiding in Hiraval's manor is threatening to break their fellowship already...

Playing the 'Adventurers'

The Loremaster does not have to play the men from Elwin's company as if they were player-heroes. This means that these characters do not need to be fleshed out using the same character creation rules found in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, nor is it necessary to worry about things like Hope, Virtues or Rewards. These characters are meant to provide for an entertaining and unusual encounter, something that should surprise the player-heroes and let them wonder about how to deal with these young troublemakers. Not everyone who wanders about Eriador need be either a brigand, a Ranger, a ghost or an Orc...

Should a fight between the companions and the 'adventurers' break out, the Loremaster may use the stats provided for each character below, giving each of them a Parry rating between 4 and 6, and an Armour rating of 1d, 1d or 2d.

Elwin

Elwin is a young Man of Bree, charismatic and quick-witted. In time, he could make a good leader, but for the moment he is a bit too naive and unwary. He grew up listening eagerly to all the old stories told about the time of the King, when all the land was united under one Crown. All his life he dreamt of buried treasure and the lost heritage of a heroic time, and one day he decided to leave home and go look for adventure.

Attribute Level: 4
Specialities: Eriador-lore
Distinctive Features: Eager, True-hearted
Relevant Skills: Inspire ♦♦♦, Travel ♦, Sword ♦♦
Endurance: 12

Fay

Enemies often underestimate the capabilities of this Hobbit-lass from Staddle, often to their disadvantage. Fay met Elwin in Bree when he caught her attempting to pick his money pouch, during last year's autumn festivities. Seeing a misguided potential in her, Elwin lectured the Hobbit girl about heroes and adventures, and a companionship was forged. Fay is the best archer in the band of outlaws and has a cutting sense of humour, which Herbert has been on the receiving end of too many times for his liking.

Attribute Level: 5
Specialities: Burglary
Distinctive Features: Gruff, Keen-eyed
Relevant Skills: Awareness ♦♦♦, Stealth ♦♦♦, Bow ♦♦
Endurance: 10

Herbert

Shorter than the average Breelander and with a rough tangle of blond hair, Herbert would be considered handsome if it wasn't for a permanent sneer etched upon his face. A fellow already prone to jealousy, Herbert has secretly envied Elwin and his status as the groups' guide since they first met, and this sentiment is starting to turn into hate under the influence of Húldrahir (see page 108). It will not be long before Herbert decides enough is enough and tries to take Elwin's place.

Attribute Level: 3
Specialities: Enemy-lore (Wolves)
Distinctive Features: Spiteful, Brutal
Relevant Skills: Awe ♦♦, Athletics ♦♦, Spear ♦♦, Dagger ♦♦♦
Endurance: 12

Folulf and Arnulf

Two Woodmen, Folulf and Arnulf hail from distant Wilderland. They made the journey across the Misty Mountains just a few months ago and met Elwin and his companions on the East Road. The young Breelander was elated at having met such far-distance travellers, and insisted that they join his fellowship. The two brothers gladly accepted what they deemed was a true-hearted proposal, and they joined the company. Folulf, the more superstitious of the two Woodmen, believes the manor to be haunted. A creeping shadow that crawls amongst the ruins during the night plagues his dreams. He will freely comment on this if given the chance.

Attribute Level: 4
Specialities: Folk-lore
Distinctive Features: Swift (Folulf), Wary (Arnulf)
Relevant Skills: Awe ♦♦, Hunting ♦♦, Axe ♦♦♦ (Folulf), Bow ♦♦ (Arnulf)
Endurance: 12

The Secret Manor

Hiraval's fortress is nothing short of unusual. Built by the best stonemasons living in Arthedain at the time, the structure is composed of different levels built one on top of the other, against the north wall of the cleft. From their vantage point atop the opposing side of the fissure, the company can easily see the various parts of the fortification, as they emerge from the leafy fretwork of the thick vegetation covering the rock wall.

1. Watchtower

This narrow, round stone tower constitutes the highest structure of the manor, and is easily the first thing the companions notice as it emerges from the foliage. It used to be three storeys in height, but its topmost floor collapsed at some time in the past. Arnulf and Folulf keep watch here during the day. By night, one of them in turn returns to the manor ruins, leaving the other on watch. From here they enjoy a good view of the bottom of the cleft and the stairway leading to the manor house.

2. Manor House

Constituting the main part of the construction, the manor house is built on two floors above the stables, and is reached from the bottom of the cleft by a flight of stone steps. The manor house comprises family rooms, servant quarters, the main hall, kitchen and library. All rooms are deserted and mainly devoid of any furniture. Large fireplaces gape open against the blackened walls, and carven timbers criss-cross the ceilings above. Debris litter all floors, making it almost impossible to move about stealthily. It is in these places, among the shadows of forgotten traditions that Elwin's company make their camp.

3. Stables

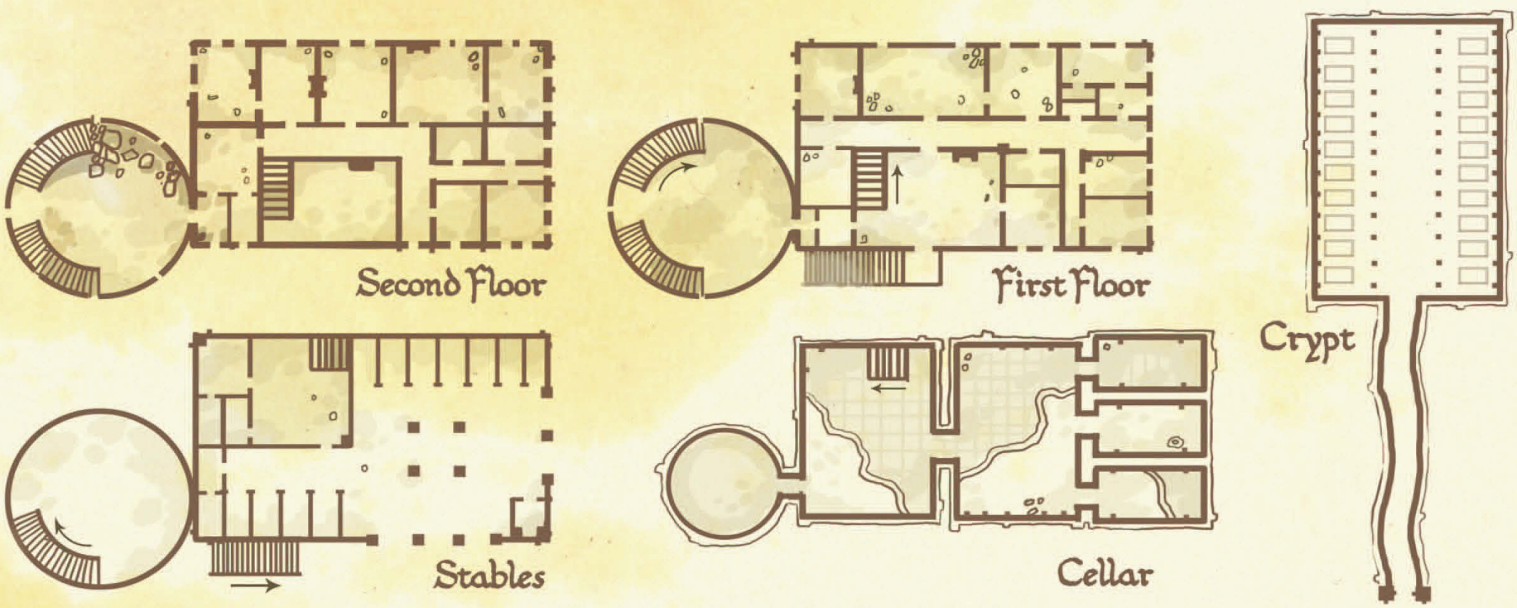
Occupying the lowest level of the manor on the surface, the stables open on the floor at the bottom of the cleft. A single horse is stabled inside, well looked after by Elwin. She is a large cart-horse, built more for strength and stamina than speed. Elwin got her from his father, as a parting gift, and he has named her Drum. During the night Drum is often nervous and skittish, requiring Elwin to remain with her, calming her with soothing words. Those with some skill in horse husbandry or perhaps an Elf may see deeper meaning in the horse's behaviour, for she senses the presence of Húldrahir in the dark of the night.

4. Cellars

Although extremely damp and flooded in places, the cellars remain largely intact. They are infested by rats that nest within rotten crates.

5. Family Crypt

Beneath the cellars there lies the family tomb of the Dúnedain who were once masters of these lands, the ancestors of Hiraval. These crypts are not reached from



the cellars, but by a hidden stairway, whose entrance is secreted among the vegetation on the cleft bottom, a few yards from the entrance to the stables. This is the resting place of Húldrahir and it is from under these grounds that he extends his malice (see page 107).

Entering the Manor

If the companions still trust Hiraval's word, they will see the adventurers occupying the ruins as a group of craven brigands, probably to be dealt with swiftly. Looking at the situation from the opposing side, the men from Elwin's company will think the same about the companions, and react accordingly.

The Loremaster must consider the approach chosen by the companions carefully, and select the most appropriate response for Elwin and his men. Violence will most likely generate violence, while a more friendly attitude will give a chance to the 'brigands' to identify the threat they are facing and possibly let them make an attempt at resolving the situation peacefully. The following paragraphs examine two options: a *direct assault* and a *stealthy approach*.

A Direct Assault

This is Hiraval's preferred course of action, one he will propose and advocate as soon as the companions start discussing their options; the Ranger openly resents the 'bandits'' intrusion in what he feels is his own house and wishes to get rid of them as quickly as possible. He does not seem to mind the likelihood of a bloodbath... what the player-heroes will think of the inevitable increase in Shadow points is entirely another matter!

The following paragraphs consider the challenges the companions will face when attacking the manor.

- **Look-outs in the Tower.** Folulf and Arnulf regularly man the tower as their company's look-outs. They have an excellent vantage point and can shoot arrows down upon any attacker at will.

- **The Lay of the Land.** Given the unusual structure of the manor, it will be difficult to scout the land in or around it. Considering such circumstances, all **Battle** rolls made to gain combat advantages are set at TN 18.

- **Protecting Edrahil.** Although capable, Edrahil is still just a boy and not hardened to the dangers of battle. Hiraval insists in him not joining any fight, but what if he should be spotted or targeted by an attack?

- **Recklessness.** The 'brigands' are unlikely to flee or surrender if attacked openly, as they feel they hold the better position. They will resist at least until both their leader Elwin and Herbert are slain.

- **Brigand Tactics.** The Woodmen will stay in the watchtower, peppering the companions with arrows as they advance on the outlaw camp, while the others hold their line within the manor, using it as cover against any ranged attacks. Once the player-heroes close the ground the 'brigands' will engage them in close combat.

A Stealthy Approach

If the companions persuade Hiraval, they may approach the manor stealthily, in order to ambush the 'brigands' as they rest. Hiraval openly demonstrates his impatience, and might even voluntarily give away the presence of the player-heroes to force the companions to attack instead.

- **Approaching the Manor.** Even in darkness, it will be a difficult task to approach the camp without being spotted: Elwin's men may be young, but are are not fools and they do place a watch during the night. If Arnulf is on watch, he is Wary, and this makes all attempts at sneaking more difficult by one level (see **Loremaster Characters as Obstacles**, on page 216 of *The One Ring*).

- **Identifying the Brigands.** If the companions enter the manor without being spotted, they may spy upon the group of 'brigands'. A successful roll of **Riddle**, **Insight** or **Battle** will identify Elwin as their leader, and should lead the companions to put their identity into question, especially if there are Hobbits or Woodmen in the company.

- **Brigand Tactics.** If the companions profit from a successful infiltration to attack the 'brigands' by surprise, the would-be adventurers will not be as organised as if they were defending themselves

from a direct assault, and might actually consider surrendering if confronted by a violent onslaught. If they are ambushed, Fay will promptly disappear into the shadows.

Meeting Elwin

If the adventurers identify Elwin's band for what it really is, either during a fight or because they got a chance to give them a good look, they might want to interact with them. If they choose to do so, the encounter can be set up using the usual rules.

What do the companions want to achieve from this encounter? The best outcome they may get may be to have Elwin and his men agree to leave the manor, but it won't be easy; Hiraval will hinder any attempt at a peaceful negotiation, as he is firmly convinced of the ill-will of these 'brigands'. The Ranger would rather have them stripped of their weapons and armour, if not put in chains and thrown down into the cellars.

Set Tolerance

Elwin is impressed by Valour, so the base Tolerance rating is set equal to the highest value among the companions. But the encounter suffers from the strain that is put on all negotiations by the suspicious Hiraval (-2 Tolerance). Moreover, if the heroes approached the 'brigands' with weapons in hand, decrease Tolerance by 1 further point; if anyone among Elwin's men has been harmed, decrease the rating by 2. Finally, the Loremaster should take into account the Standing rating of any Woodman or Hobbit character, as their names might not be unknown to Folulf, Arnulf or Fay.

Introduction

The player-heroes are free to present themselves in the way they see fit. Elwin is *True-hearted*, and thus appreciates plain speech, possibly given by a spokesman. When the heroes are done making their introduction, Elwin introduces his companions:

"I am Elwin, an adventurer from Bree, and I am the leader of this group of... free spirits. The one who looks like he wants to stick a knife in you is Herbert, my right-hand man. Our Hobbit-lass with eyes of steel is Fay. Those ready to pin you with arrows," he nods briefly towards the watchtower, "are Folulf and Arnulf, hailing from distant Wilderland. Now speak freely; why are you here?"

Interaction

Confronted by the real deal, Elwin and his aspiring adventurers adopt a competitive attitude towards the companions. They are easily awed by them, and will probably be very impressed if the companions start recounting something of their deeds, but at the same time they will feel the need to impress them on their part.

The Loremaster should consider the direction the conversation takes, to find the appropriate moment to set up one or more challenges, pitting one companion against one of the 'brigands'. These challenges may be of different nature, from a drinking contest to a round of archery. Two examples follow:

- Fay challenges an archer in the company. She places a full waterskin against a wall as a target. The difficulty to hit it is TN 16 – the player-hero goes first. If he scores a great success or more, Fay declares herself beaten and congratulates the companion. If the hero fails or scores an ordinary success, Fay shoots an arrow and scores a great success! A great or extraordinary success counts towards the encounter's total (see **Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter** below).

- Herbert draws his dagger and challenges a hero to a 'fake' duel with knives. The contestants lunge, dodge and slash, trying to surprise their opponent, but refraining from actually doing any harm. This works as an opposed action using the **Dagger** skill (see *The One Ring*, page 148); the contestants roll against a difficulty equal to 10 plus the Parry rating of the opponent. The first contestant to win three times is declared the winner. If Herbert wins, his final strike is a real thrust, dealing 5 points of Endurance loss! If the player-hero wins, add three successes to the encounter's total.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

Once the interaction has been played out, the total number of successes is compared to the following:

1: If the player-heroes proposed that Elwin leave the manor, Hiraval demands that they leave their weapons and armour behind when they do so. Elwin will not accept it, unless threatened by the prospect of an armed confrontation. If this happens, Elwin commands his friends to drop their weapons; he does not want them to die this way. The companions have gained an enemy, and it is possible that Elwin and his friends will actually turn into real brigands one day, failing to find another opportunity to gain fame and fortune. If the heroes deny Hiraval's request, he erupts in a rage and can be calmed down only after a prolonged effort.

2-4: The companions succeed in negotiating peacefully with Elwin, and he promises to leave the manor the next day. Hiraval does not say anything against the decision, but he secretly feels betrayed by the heroes and takes another step towards darkness.

5-6: Elwin agrees to whatever the companions proposed him, and Hiraval seems to go along with the decision.

7+: The encounter has progressed splendidly, and Elwin and his men are impressed by the heroes so much they propose to help them in their task, should they consent for them to join up temporarily. Hiraval seems gladdened by their presence, as if the meeting made him think of how many strangers became friends under that same roof in the years when the manor stood intact and his family ruled.

- Part Four -
A Night of Treachery and Madness

This part of the adventure considers that Elwin and his men are still at the manor, either as prisoners of the company or as friends.

During that same night, following the encounter, the malice of the shade Húldrahir threatens the companions and Elwin's men. The hungry ghost seeks to stir everyone up against each other, in particular acting against those whose spirit it has weakened already: Hiraval and Herbert. Húldrahir may naturally also target a player-hero, should his Shadow rating make him a suitable victim.

In the case of Herbert and Hiraval, the consequences of Húldrahir's malicious actions are detailed in the paragraphs **Breaking Herbert** and **Breaking Hiraval,** respectively. Ideally, the two episodes will take place shortly one after the other, in a chaotic crescendo. If a hero is targeted, Húldrahir employs its Dreadful Spells (Madness) special ability, to increase its victim's Shadow point score or to trigger a bout of madness, should a hero fail a Corruption check with an result (see Húldrahir's description on page 108). Húldrahir will employ a maximum of 3 Hate points to fuel his Dreadful Spells before the final confrontation with the companions is initiated.

Breaking Herbert

Long, finger-like shadows stretch out amongst the manor ruins. As the companions and the 'brigands' finish eating a supper of weak broth around the fire, Herbert drifts into an uneasy sleep. As he lies by the fire, the evil will of the shade Húldrahir reaches out to the young man, filling his dreams with fear and delusions.

A hero with an appropriate Trait (*Wary*, *Keen-eyed* or similar) may be allowed a roll of **Insight**: a success notices that Herbert's rest seems very troubled; if the issue is raised with Elwin or Fay, they can both confirm that Herbert has been sleeping fitfully since they started staying inside the manor.

If any companion is keeping an eye on Herbert, a few hours later he wakes up and approaches the group leader to engage him in small talk. If no one is spying on him openly, Herbert suddenly and silently plunges a dagger deep into Elwin's chest, killing him!

If the companions do not witness this foul deed, Herbert returns to his resting place and raises the alarm claiming that he has just witnessed one of the player-heroes kill their leader...

A Confrontation

As the alarm is sounded, Herbert points to the player-hero he has accused (the Loremaster should choose the character acting as the company's leader or Guide), while Fay cries out in dismay and rushes towards the stricken Elwin. With the camp in disarray, Herbert shouts, "I saw him just now. He buried his knife deep in Elwin's chest".

The companions need to think fast, as Hiraval sees the opportunity to finally get rid of these 'brigands' with the help of the companions – the Ranger quickly sides with the player-heroes and draws his long sword, ready for battle. Seeing the impending threat, Fay, Folulf, Arnulf and the deranged Herbert are left without a choice and must stand against the company.

The Loremaster may allow one of the following options before the battle begins:

- A hero succeeding at a **Riddle** test will notice that Herbert's scabbard is empty, the weapon now lodged in Elwin's chest. If accused, Herbert shrugs, stating that the player-hero must have taken it from him while he slept. Unconvinced, Fay will attack Herbert as the fight with the heroes erupts, killing him instantly with a well-placed arrow to the back.

- The player-heroes may attempt to intimidate (an **Awe** test at TN 16) Elwin's men, counting on their superior strength. A great or extraordinary success results in both Folulf and Arnulf laying down their weapons. If this happens, Fay takes the chance to put her art of disappearing into use and vanish into the darkness. If left alone, Herbert will madly charge into the companions, only to be cut down mercilessly by Hiraval.

If a full fight with Elwin's men erupts, the battle will probably be short and bloody. The 'brigands' will fight desperately, believing they are facing the murderers of their leader and friend.

As the battle reaches its tragic conclusion, the Loremaster should consider a Shadow points increase for each companion, as killing Elwin's men qualifies as a misdeed (the amount must be weighed by the Loremaster, as the circumstances are certainly going to vary wildly for each group of players).

If that was not enough, when the unfortunate fight with Elwin's men finally reaches its conclusion, the heroes start perceiving an oppressing presence weighing down upon their spirit, a feeling that finally hints at something more sinister working amongst the shadows of the manor. All companions must pass a Corruption test: those who fail gain a point of Shadow.

A Dark Night

As the night deepens, a storm breaks overhead, distant thunder quickly followed by a light rain that progressively worsens.

If any of Elwin's men are still alive, they will now talk of many nights here filled with restless sleep and dark dreams. A darkness rests over this place, they say, even on the brightest day. With a little cajoling, Folulf or Arnulf will blame the tragic occurrences of the last few hours on

this darkness, adding that they are now certain that the manor is cursed, and that they all should leave. At these words, Hiraval will burst into laughter, his apparent mirth turning quickly into scorn. The Ranger will again accuse the 'brigands' for everything that occurred so far, and bid them leave his house, if they do not like it here.

Searching the Ruins

It is highly likely that the player-heroes will at some point search the ruins. Perhaps the concerns raised by Elwin's men match what they feel about the manor or maybe they simply want to explore the area before once again bedding down for the night.

The Loremaster should use the map and manor description at page 100 to describe what they find. In particular, a Search test made near the stables will discover the hidden gate leading to the tomb, an opening covered by overgrown roots and underbrush. A sturdy wooden door reinforced with iron blocks the entrance. A great or extraordinary success in the Search test identifies sinister signs and figures scrawled above the doorway, their carvings too dim to read.

If the heroes are searching the ruins through the night the storm is now at its height, making it impossible for the player-heroes to see anything. Hiraval insists they continue any investigation at daybreak, and he and Edrahil return to the ruins to spend the night inside.

The rain continues unabated, quickly turning the grass and earth at the bottom of the cleft into thick mud. Each flash of lightning casts stark and eerie shadows, the dark ruins reaching up like claws...

Dark Portents

In the middle of the night, Húldrahir reaches out to the sleeping adventurers, darkening their dreams, and puts fear in the hearts of those who are awake.

Everyone sleeping must pass a Corruption test at TN 14, TN 16 for those who saw the uncanny signs carved in the stones outside. Those who fail the test dream of walking towards the wooden door. As they approach they hear a chilling voice, as if carried on the wind:

"To my house of old you roam,
Usurpers to my noble throne,
To rouse me from my longest sleep,
Your blood and sinew mine to keep!"

If anyone is keeping watch, the Loremaster requires them to pass a Fear test, as the thunder crashes with such unnatural violence that the companions believe they can perceive an evil wrath behind it. Those who fail cover their ears in fear, while those who still have their wits about them are allowed to make an **Awareness** test with TN 16: on a success, a hero hears the splintering of shattered wood and cracked stone.

If the player-heroes wake Hiraval to discuss these sounds and dreams, the Ranger seems oblivious to them at all. Edrahil sleeps soundly as the companions discuss these events and Hiraval will not wake the boy under any circumstances. *"Let the child rest,"* the Ranger will say. *"He has seen much these past days. Too much for a boy of his years."* Perceptive characters succeeding at an **Insight** test will see that dark circles underline Hiraval's eyes and his brow is furrowed with concern. Should a character raise these issues he waves them away with a comment: *"Dark eyes and furrowed brow are a Ranger's lot in life."*

Should any player-hero mention or especially recite the poem heard in dream, then Hiraval's reaction will be more severe. Quickly rising to his feet, he hisses, *"Do not speak aloud of such things in the dark watches of the night!"* After a terrible moment passes, the Ranger composes himself and sits down again, raising his hand in placation. *"Please, be still. I am troubled by mere thoughts and will speak of them in the morning, but no sooner! Now sleep".*

Breaking Hiraval

Unknown to the player-heroes, Hiraval has suffered far greater than everyone else at the hands of the restless Spectre haunting the manor. By now, the cursed Ranger believes he has struck a bargain with Húldrahir that will see the curse laid upon his family be finally lifted. All the Ranger needs to do is to bring his own son Edrahil down into the crypts of his family...

As the turn of Hiraval to keep watch comes, Húldrahir instructs him to bring Edrahil to him. Carrying the sleeping boy, the Ranger will make his way towards the entrance to the crypt and their doom. If the player-heroes have no one on watch with Hiraval during such time, then they will notice his absence and that of his son only when the Ranger is but a shadow in the night.

If someone is awake when Hiraval takes Edrahil, then questioning the Dúnadan will result in no response; the Ranger's eyes are fixed to a distant point, his face set. The Ranger must be tackled physically to prevent him from entering the crypt, something that the assembled companions succeed at automatically. If a companion tries to stop Hiraval by himself, he needs to succeed in an **Athletics** test (TN 18); upon a failure, the Ranger pushes away the intruder and presses on.

Edrahil's Fate as a Revelation Episode

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules found within Rivendell, you might tie the fate of Hiraval's son to a Revelation episode. If such an occurrence is due to the rules for Eye Awareness, then the Ranger might disappear with his son without the player-heroes be given the chance to stop him at all. In such a case, the heroes will be left with just the option of running after the deranged Ranger, in the hope of finding him in time.

A much harsher application of the principle that a Revelation episode always worsens the company's predicament, might be that of having the attempts at saving Edrahil actually harm the boy, or even kill him. The boy might fall from his father's embrace and break his neck upon a stone as a companion tries to restrain or attack Hiraval, or an attack aimed at Hiraval might hit his son instead.

Into the Crypt

This part of the adventure is written on the assumption that Hiraval has brought Edrahil into the crypt, and has been followed by the player-heroes soon after.

The storm rages around the companions as they make their way to the crypt. Thunder shakes the ground, lightning flashes across the black sky and the rain beats down upon them all, quickly drenching their clothes. Reaching the gateway, they discover the door has been torn asunder; charred and blasted wood lies scattered around the archway while the long iron hinges are bent and twisted like an old crone's fingers, beckoning in the dark.

As the companions stand before the opening, the storm suddenly quiets and the rain stops, its place taken by a freezing wind that rushes past them and beyond the blasted crypt door. The light from the companions' torches flickers in the night and long shadows dance about them as they take the stairs and descend into darkness.

Inner Darkness

Fear flows out of the opening like a cold vapour. The flight of centuries-old steps climbs down into the ground. As the companions make their descent they see the light of a torch ahead mixed with an eerie, sickly glow. Those who previously heard the poem in their dreams must now pass a Corruption test (TN 16) or be overwhelmed by a sense of ill-omen – they gain a point of Shadow (the TN is normal for those who didn't hear it).

The companions follow the steep and low-ceilinged stairway into the earth for about sixty feet before they step out into a large room, approximately thirty feet in width and stretching out into the darkness ahead. Many torches illuminate the chamber, as they hang from iron-wrought wall brackets. In two columns stretching out beyond the light cast by the torches are the tombs of Hiraval's ancestors, laid to rest over many centuries under their manor home.

But it is something else that grabs the attention of the companions. Twenty feet away, between the two columns of tombs stands Hiraval, his back to the approaching companions. Before him lies the boy Edrahil, his sleeping body stretched upon the floor. At the edge of torchlight stands a dark, vague figure wrapped in ghost-like and torn robes; and where a head should be, two points of sickly green light burning with wicked intent.

"...Your blood and sinew mine to keep," a dreary voice rasps. "Slay the boy and the spell will be broken, the Morgul-

lord's curse finally lifted. For too many centuries the wind howling in the halls of your fathers has been black."

A claw-like hand reaches out, pointing to the child and you see Hiraval visibly shaking and trembling, moaning as if in pain, as he draws his sword and looks down upon Edrahil.

The Doom of Hiraval

The ghost-like apparition in the crypt is the Spectre of Húldrahir, an ancestor of Hiraval who once was cursed by the Lord of the Ringwraiths himself, the Witch-king of Angmar. The restless spirit haunts the ruins of his former abode, and drives to madness all those who linger here. Suffering from the Witch-king's curse himself, Hiraval has been slowly consumed by the dark presence of his ancestor, and he is now on the verge of taking the last step towards madness that will end his line and curse him forever.

When this finally comes to pass, the will of the Lord of the Ringwraiths will be done, and the shade of Húldrahir will be all that remains of a once proud and noble family.

The scene set before the companions has them facing the Spectre, but also a deranged Hiraval. The Ranger is under the thrall of the Spectre and is considered to be suffering the effects of a Bout of Madness: he will attack anyone who tries to prevent him from killing the boy (the characteristics of the Ranger are on page 95; additionally, consider him to have a Parry rating of 6, and an Armour rating of 2d).

With all that has gone before, the player-heroes should now be conscious that the Ranger is not in control of his actions and might wish to stop him without killing him (see **Non-lethal Attacks**, opposite). Other options include attempting to disarm him and then wrestling him to the ground (using an opposed **Athletics** test).

Incapable of attacking the companions physically, Húldrahir the Spectre will employ his Dreadful Spells and Visions of Torment special abilities to harm them.

If the companions do not do something about it, Hiraval will kill Edrahil before their eyes, and then break under the weight of his demented deed and succumb fully to the Shadow: he will turn against the heroes, sword in hand, and attack them relentlessly, searching for release in a quick death.

Non-lethal Attacks

Sometimes a companion may wish to refrain from dealing potentially lethal damage to an adversary – for example, by using only the flat of a blade, the haft of an axe, and so on. When this happens, a successful attack deals only a loss of Endurance, but cannot inflict a Wound (regardless of the result on the Feat die).

Húldrahir, Dúnadan Spectre

Húldrahir appears as a tall, ghost-like figure shrouded in a threadbare cloak and rusted chain armour, once finely wrought. Beneath a helm of silvered metal his eyes burn with a green and sickly light from where his head should be.

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
35	9
Parry	Armour
7	2d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 1
Movement, 4	Custom, 3
Perception, 3	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
None (incorporeal)	
Special Abilities	
Ghost-form	Dreadful Spells*
Strike Fear	Visions of Torment

**Madness:* A hero who fails a Corruption check (TN 16) due to *Dreadful Spells* experiences harrowing visions, causing him to gain 5 Shadow points. If the check failed producing an Eye of Sauron, then the player relinquishes the control of the hero to the Loremaster for a full round of combat, as if he experienced a Bout of Madness (see *The One Ring*, page 225).

Húldrahir can be harmed only by heroes wielding a weapon possessing an Enchanted Quality (see Ghost-form, in *Rivendell*, page 76). If the heroes cannot defeat the Spectre, at least its plans may be thwarted by saving Hiraval and his son.

- Epilogue -
Húldrahir Defeated

Achieving victory at Hiraval's manor may come at a great cost. The body count may be high, including some (or all!) among Elwin's men, or Hiraval and his son Edrahil.

If the Ranger and his son (or one among them) end up dead, the Loremaster will most likely have the companions gain a number of additional points of Shadow, based on the circumstances of their demise and the type of relationship the heroes had with the deceased; 1 or 2 points should be enough, to represent the guilt and regret felt by the player-heroes.

If Hiraval survives his son, the Ranger will be wracked with grief. He won't survive the experience, unless the companions think of escorting him back to Rivendell, in order to rest and heal.

If Edrahil survives his father, the player-heroes should feel duty-bound to bring him back to the safety of Rivendell. It will take some time for the boy to recover but he will never forget; in years to come, Edrahil will become a Ranger, to redeem the name of his father and that of his family.

If Húldrahir is not defeated, the deaths of Hiraval and/or Edrahil will spell the end for the ruins of the manor and the surrounding lands. The region will become a dark and blighted place, shunned by everyone who wanders across Eriador.

If the Spectre has been banished, the Ranger might leave the secret manor to the companions as a gift with his dying words. The ruins and the surrounding land can be set up as a rating 9 holding (see the rules for holdings on page 8 of *The Darkening of Mirkwood*).

Should both Hiraval and Edrahil survive, the Ranger will have miraculously succeeded in reclaiming his heritage. Within weeks, other Rangers and allies will arrive at the ruins of the former manor and a small settlement of tents will quickly spring up with more permanent structures added during the later years.

Although it will never reach the past glories of the manor, the settlement will prove vital to the Rangers as a waypoint just north of Weathertop and a place to recuperate and replenish supplies.

Shadows over - Tyrn Gorthad -

- **When:** The company starts this quest in the Summer of 2975, though this can be moved a few years forward or backwards as necessary.

- **Where:** The adventure starts in Rivendell, but eventually ranges across much of Eriador, from Angmar, to the edge of the Old Forest, before eventually ending in the Barrow-downs.

- **What:** Barrow-wights are passing far beyond the Barrow-downs and growing bolder all the time. Gandalf the Grey asks the characters to help him discover what can be done to put them to rest permanently.

- **Why:** All of Eriador is in mortal danger from free-roaming Barrow-wights. Worse still, they may very well represent the vanguard for the return of the Witch-king of Angmar. Rivendell would certainly be one of the primary targets for such an army.

- **Who:** The ultimate aim of the quest is finding a way to help Gandalf permanently deal with the Barrow-wights of Tyrn Gorthad.

Stout Hearts

Gandalf will not approach a company that hasn't already impressed him – though they may not know it, or have ever met him personally before. Before starting this quest characters should have already completed several of the other adventures from *Ruins of the North*, particularly *Nightmares of Angmar*, or equally harrowing Loremaster originals. Alternatively they may be adventurers from Wilderland who impressed Gandalf during the events of *The Darkening of Mirkwood*. Additionally, there should be at least one Ranger of the North or High Elf of Rivendell in the party, and one or more characters with either a Valour or Wisdom score of 4.

Foreword

Shadows over Tyrn Gorthad is structured a bit differently than other adventures for *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*. It is not played out over a single Adventuring phase, indeed, it will take several in-game years before the company is ready to confront the danger at the heart of this adventure; but ready or not, they will have to act before the danger grows too great for all of Eriador.

After being approached by Gandalf the Grey to undertake a vitally important quest, the company will travel across Eriador, frequently into great peril, as they seek out key pieces of ancient lore that they will need to set right a terrible menace. They will learn more than even most of the Wise know about the Barrow-downs, in Sindarin "Tyrn Gorthad"; a place of sacred burial mounds, now long haunted by evil spirits. The spells that once bound the undead to their tombs are fading with the slowly waxing power of the Shadow. Gandalf needs the company's help to gather the lore he needs and, ultimately, protect him while he attempts to enact them anew. Time, though, is not on their side. The characters will have just over two years to gather the knowledge that will help the Grey Pilgrim enact the rites. Correspondingly, there are portions of **Shadows over Tyrn Gorthad** that some companies may never get to, it will entirely depend on how much they learn and the choices they make along the way.

Adventuring Phase

Part One - The Vigilance of Mithrandir

The first part of the adventure describes Gandalf's fears and sees him asking the company if they will undertake a quest to retrieve vital information about how the Barrow-wights of Tyrn Gorthad were summoned and bound to the Barrow-downs.

Part Two - Return to Angmar

This section deals with the long journey from Rivendell to the Grey Waste of Angmar. The company may have to deal with fierce weather and fiercer foes along the way.

Part Three - The Valley of the Dead

In the easternmost reaches of the Mountains of Angmar rests the valley of Nan Gorthrim. There, a sorcerous tower

holds the secrets that the Grey Pilgrim seeks, along with a lot of Goblins and a terrible Great Orc.

Part Four - On the Downs

Depending on what they learn in Rivendell, the company may wish to journey to the Barrow-downs to study them and learn all that they can about them in the hopes of helping Gandalf with what needs to be done.

Part Five - The Hidden Vault at Fornost

The company may decide to return to Fornost Erain, in order to find the hidden vault of the chronicler Egalmir and see what information they can learn from his family's dedicated scholarship.

Part Six - Mirabella's Song

The company may hear rumours of a Hobbit girl who spent a night on the Barrow-downs and despite assault by a Barrow-wight, miraculously survived. Interviewing the young lady seems to be in order.

Part Seven - Oldest & Fatherless

The company is sent by Gandalf the Grey to meet with Tom Bombadil and receive his blessings before they confront the Barrow-wights.

Part Eight - Casting Out the Shadow

Gandalf the Grey must reinforce the ancient magic that binds the Barrow-downs. He can only succeed if the company manages to protect him from a horde of Barrow-wights lead by the terrible master of Tyrn Gorthad himself, the evil being known only as the Wight-king.

Staging Events

While running adventures in an ongoing campaign of *The One Ring*, Loremasters are encouraged to speak of news and tidings of distant events that come to the company's attention each year. The recent events in Eriador that will eventually lead to the opening of **Shadows over Tyrn Gorthad** should be introduced two years before the adventure proper begins.

Year 2973

In early autumn, dark rumours spread amidst the Dúnedain. Stories tell of how two Rangers dealt with the threat of a Barrow-wight that was seen wandering along a street leading to Bree. If the story is to be given credit, it relates a most unusual occurrence.

Year 2974

In the spring, several witnesses see a ghostly apparition wander into the northern reaches of Buckland. A group of Rangers investigate the matter, and reportedly destroy a Barrow-wight before it could ford the Brandywine into the Shire. The fight attracts the attention of several Hobbit Shirriffs, but the Rangers manage to conceal their deed. Word is passed through "unobtrusive" channels to the Master of Buckland that he should set a few more stout souls to watching the boundaries.

In the late winter, a Ranger named Cirion (alternatively, a friend of the company's – see page 113) is attacked and killed by a Barrow-wight at the base of the Weather Hills. The creature then flees west before other Rangers can track it.

Year 2975 (In this year, Gandalf asks for the company's assistance in the early summer.)

A Hobbit girl from Bree loses her way and wanders into the Barrow-downs at night early in the autumn. She survives the experience, and upon her return she tells the tale of how she found refuge atop one of the hills, and how a Barrow-wight came for her, but did not get near until daybreak. The story swiftly became the talk of the town in Bree. The company first hear this tale told in late spring or early summer of 2976, unless their adventures took them somewhere near Bree (see **Mirabella's Song** on page 131).

Year 2976

In the spring, a determined group of Rangers fights off a group of Barrow-wights wandering along the East Road. The Rangers speak with some apprehension of how close the Wights were getting to Weathertop, and how difficult it was for them to stop them.

In the summer, Rangers watching the Shire report ghostly figures spying the land of the Hobbits from a distance.

Year 2977

More and more witnesses report seeing Barrow-wights in full daylight.

– Part One –
The Vigilance of Mithrandir

It is the lot of all Wizards to ponder, ruminating over scraps of news and lore for long, wearying hours, far past the point when other less-wisdom filled heads would have sought their rest. Even so, Gandalf the Grey is far more frequently given to brooding than others, and with good reason, for his cares are greater. Tidings from the west have been troubling of late: Barrow-wights have been seen beyond the borders of the Barrow-downs...

As the Grey Pilgrim's thoughts once lingered in the East, contemplating the dangers of a Dragon running rampant throughout the North, they have recently, unexpectedly, turned to the West and not just towards his friends in the Shire, but to the dark land not so far from their borders. If the Dragon of Erebor could have been used to serve the Shadow's purposes, how much worse could come from an army of the undead rising in the very heart of Eriador?

Little, in truth, is known of what really happened to Tyrn Gorthad. Many hold that the Witch-king of Angmar was behind its blight (see **The History of Tyrn Gorthad** box below), but where is the proof of this? And why did it take him so very long to enact his evil against a people that were already beaten? Why did the greatest of the Nazgûl go to such lengths, if not part of a move of a grander scheme?

Gandalf the Grey slowly puffs away at his pipe, thinking, and a plan begins to form...

Elvish Singing & Dark Tidings

The company has been invited to Rivendell, to take part in a celebration commemorating the anniversary of a legendary victory from the First Age. There is to be a great

The History of Tyrn Gorthad

Characters with the appropriate Traits will doubtless want to know exactly what they do know about the history of the Barrow-downs. What is generally known by the folk of Eriador is that the Barrow-downs are a place to avoid if you wish to stay alive. The perpetually fog-shrouded hills are covered with grave markers so weathered that whomever they once venerated or whatever they once represented is long lost to time. Stone doors in the sides of the hills mark the greatest of the tombs, but robbers that seek after such things are considered to be fools, one and all. The barrows are cursed and their owners are restless. Nothing good ever comes of interfering with the dead. If a traveller must pass through the Barrow-downs, they go quickly and only by day. Generally folks take the extra time to travel around them, especially since the great East Road lies immediately north of the Downs and the Old Forest borders them to the west.

Those whose lore or memory reaches back into the past (those with the appropriate Lore Traits) may be considered to possess a knowledge comparable to the information about the Barrow-downs presented in Rivendell on page 60 and 61, and here further detailed.

Tyrn Gorthad was once one of the most sacred sites in all the West. The Great Barrows were originally built by Men living in Eriador before the Men of the West came to the shores of Middle-earth. Their funerary tradition was maintained by Elendil and his heirs, until the wars with Angmar many centuries later. When in the year 1409 of the Third Age the armies of the Witch-king destroyed the Tower of Amon Sûl and ravaged the kingdom of Cardolan, the few surviving Dúnedain took refuge in the hills of Tyrn Gorthad where they made their homes for two more centuries. Then, a terrible plague from the south devastated their numbers. Not long after, evil spirits arose from under the barrows and slaughtered or drove out all that remained.

From that time forth, the Barrow-wights ruled the Barrow-downs and the Dúnedain only tread there with great care. Many among the Wise and the Rangers of the North believe that the Witch-king of Angmar sent the evil spirits that dwell in the Barrow-downs. Others hold that the many deaths caused by the plague awoke something sinister that already slumbered beneath the barrows.

deal of singing, along with feasting, and the telling of ancient legends that are seldom recounted in the twilight years of the Third Age.

The valley of Imladris is dotted with great silver and gold lanterns that shine like stars even by day, but more so at night when they flare bright holding back the dark, save where the Elves have purposefully dimmed them to create a continuous twilight amidst the trees. Wine and good cheer fills the valley, along with fair voices raised in hymns to Elbereth. The characters all have glasses of whatever they most like to drink thrust into their hands as they wander down towards the House of Elrond.

The companions are hailed by friends and acquaintances (the more so if Master Elrond is one of their Patrons or Rivendell has been opened as a sanctuary) with a few asking what news they bring. A successful **Insight** roll notices that some of the Elves are hiding some sorrow. When asked at first, they avert saying it isn't the time for grim tidings, but if pressed they will sadly note that news of the death of a Ranger who was greatly esteemed in Rivendell has recently come to the valley. His name was Cirion, a kindly Dúnadan, and he was well loved for both his wisdom and his singing voice. (If possible, this should instead be a Ranger the player-heroes knew and liked – perhaps Randír from **The Company of the Wain**). They don't know any of the details as yet, other than that he was apparently killed near the Weather Hills.

Master Elrond's Summons

After the characters have had a few hours to enjoy themselves, perhaps during a break between tales, a messenger comes to them saying that Master Elrond requests their presence. The player-heroes are led to a beautiful library on the second floor of the house, a room with enough comfortable chairs to serve as a meeting room.

Elrond already stands in the room, holding a long tapering crystalline wine glass and turns, smiling, to greet the company as they arrive.

"Ah, here they are. Welcome and thank you all for coming. May I present my dear friend, Mithrandir, or as he is frequently called in the North, Gandalf the Grey."

Gandalf! There is not one child in the north that has not heard at least one remarkable tale about the Wandering Wizard. He steps out of the shadows of the room, where he was hidden in an alcove, and regards the company with his penetrating dark eyes beneath long, bushy white eyebrows. He wears a simple grey cloak and his immense silver beard which hangs to his waist. In one hand he holds a glass twinned to the one Elrond is drinking from and with his other, he gestures towards a small assortment of similar ones along with a decanter of wine, while asking the company to join them.

Set Tolerance

Gandalf values Wisdom and Valour both, so the Encounter's initial Tolerance is equal to the highest of either attribute in the company. Increase the Tolerance of the encounter by 1 if there are any Elves in the company, and by an additional 1 if there are any Rangers of the North. Finally, if Master Elrond is well disposed to the party, add another +1; if Elrond is a formal Patron of the party, add +3 instead. Add similar bonuses for far-travelling groups, if they are friendly with Beorn or Radagast.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

This encounter is a bit different from most adventures for *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*: Gandalf has already chosen the company for his quest (whether they like it or not!) or he wouldn't be meeting with them at all. The successes rolled throughout the encounter allow the Loremaster to determine just how far into his confidence Gandalf is willing to let the characters at this time. Far too often, treachery has undone his plans against the Shadow.

What the Wizard has learned about the company gives him hope, their past actions are inspiring, and the assessment of Master Elrond means much to him, but still, he must judge for himself how far he can trust them – this is vitally important, because Gandalf will have to place his life in their hands before the end...

Introduction

Gandalf already knows perfectly well who the members of the company are and has no particular need to hear their presentations embellished upon. All the companions need do is have a spokesman give their names. An **Insight** roll will easily reveal this. Otherwise, **Courtesy** will do.

Playing Gandalf the Grey

"Do not meddle in the affairs of Wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger."

Stare right at members of the company when they are talking to you, as if weighing every word. When considering your own words, stroke your long beard, or take slow, thoughtful puffs off your pipe. You have more cares than most will ever comprehend, yet mirth and hope still bubble up within you, appearing at unexpected times.

You can play the doddering old man if it suits you, but most times, you're swift of action and razor sharp of tongue. You always know more than you let on. Always.

Interaction

After the group has become acquainted, Gandalf settles himself into one of the cushioned chairs surrounding the table, gesturing for the company to do likewise. Elrond also sits, but for the most part, he only listens to the rest of the conversation, though he responds when spoken to; however, his keen glance seldom leaves the company as they interact with the Wizard.

Gandalf steeples his fingers and asks: *"What do you know of Barrow-wights?"*

The company can answer as they will. They may have faced such creatures during their adventures before, which they can recount with an appropriate task (a roll of **Inspire**, **Song** or using the *Story-telling* Trait). Otherwise a **Lore** test will bring up what they heard about them: that they are undead, walking in the hollow places under the Great Barrows of Tyrn Gorthad. A Ranger making a **Riddle** roll can recall rumours, in Dúnedain circles, of a Barrow-wight having been encountered outside Bree within the last few years.

When the party is finished, Gandalf says, *"Late this past winter, a Ranger named Cirion was slain on the Weather Hills by a Barrow-wight, over a hundred miles from the Barrow-downs. Early last year, a Wight was destroyed inside the borders of the Shire. Within the last two years, another one was encountered on a street leading to Bree. One or two can be chance. Three?"*

Gandalf pauses and looks about the room.

"You are, none of you, fools or you would not be here. The Dark Lord openly declared himself nearly three decades ago now, though his plots and agents were in motion long years before that. We cannot claim to know what is on his mind, but one thing is certain – Sauron would see the valley of Imladris dealt with once and for all, along with those who dwell within it. I once spent a very long time indeed thinking about how to remove a live Dragon from the North, lest see it one day be used against the House of Elrond."

"The Barrow-wights are an evil to which we have long grown accustomed and we think of them but little. Their recent restlessness made me start asking questions. This winter I woke to a sudden fear, one I had not yet considered: what if they are more than the cursed guardians of tombs? What if they are an army, sitting in the very heart of Eriador, awaiting their master's call? I resolved to know more and opened my mind to Master Elrond."

"Here in this place of lore I have discovered much, yet there might be more that is hidden from me, secreted where I cannot go without the Enemy immediately knowing; in the north, where the witch-realm of Angmar once stood. Now, I know you've been to Carn Dûm itself. A touchy business that, yet here you all are. For the safety of all Eriador and this house, I must ask you to return to Angmar and retrieve the information I seek."

Below are some of the company's likely questions and Gandalf's responses; an **Insight**, **Persuade** or **Riddle** roll is suitable for each.

What do you hope to learn?

"Many scholars and the wisest among the Dúnedain assume that it was the Witch-king who cursed the Barrow-downs. But there is no irrefutable proof of this, and I need more than speculations. If that proves to be the case, then I need to learn what sort of spells the Black Captain wrought in order to have any chance of undoing them."

How do you know what you seek is there?
"After the fall of the Witch-king, much of his realm was destroyed. But a measure of lore about the lay of that land survived and was preserved here in Rivendell. Among the figured maps of Master Elrond there are some marking the location of many fastnesses and watchtowers that once stood throughout the Mountains of Angmar."

"The location of one of such places, located furthest away from Carn Dûm, has been annotated by the Elven scribe who drew the map, and identified as 'Nan Gorthrim'. As Master Elrond here can confirm, that is Sindarin for 'Valley of the Dead', a name that other tales associate closely with the Witch-king and the working of sorcery."

What will we be looking for?
"I am seeking a writing, or maybe a collection of writings, inscribed using a peculiar set of symbols. They could be carved on stone walls, worked in metal or penned on rolls of parchment perhaps. I will show you drawings of such symbols and teach you how to recognise them."

Where is this Nan Gorthrim?
"North-east of Mount Gram, below one of the south-easternmost peaks of the mountains of Angmar. Its distance from Carn Dûm is another reason why I think it is the place we seek. The Witch-king needed a secret place, away from the chaos of ruling a kingdom and mustering armies of Orcs and Trolls."

Why aren't you coming with us?
"The journey will take you deep into a Shadow Land, a place where there might be watchers set to spy upon any trespassers. If I was to enter that land, then the purpose of our quest, or at least its significance for the Free Peoples, would be immediately revealed."

How much help are we going to receive?
"Master Elrond has already agreed to outfit our expedition. I shall accompany you to the edge of the wastes and there await your return."

Compare the number of successful rolls the companions have made during their conversation with Gandalf against the entries below. While Gandalf was fairly certain that the company was his choice, the number of successes indicates just how far into his confidence the old conjurer is willing to bring them.

0-2: Gandalf is wary. Something is amiss with this company: they seem to be somewhat less than he was led to believe, which makes him fear that the heroes have weaknesses that the Enemy will be ready to exploit. Gandalf is willing to accompany the characters, but will say little of what he thinks, spending most of his time studying them closely. He will escort the characters to the camp of the Rangers, but will leave promptly when the company's "three weeks" is up (see page 118).

3-5: Gandalf is satisfied with the player-heroes. He confesses to them that he fears there might have been more encounters with the Barrow-wights beyond the borders of the Barrow-downs than have been signalled, and that they've been increasing yearly. He will lead the company all the way to the shadow of Mount Gram, sharing much of what he knows and strange tales besides. He will await the player-heroes' return beyond the time he says he will. All companions gain an additional Experience point from travelling with Gandalf.

6+: Gandalf is impressed. The entry for 2-5 applies, but all the characters will instead get 2 extra Experience points, as Gandalf will be particularly informative during the journey.

Gandalf and Elrond are aware they've just asked the company to go into a great deal of peril on an uncertain mission with little reward. If the company refuses, they're disappointed but understanding. If this happens, Gandalf eventually determines he must go himself, despite the consequences. This has repercussions later in the adventure: see page 137; however, the Loremaster may still contrive for the company to get involved, see the end of **Part Three – The Tower of Icy Flame** on page 126 for details.

The Dark Heart of the Matter

If the company agrees to undertake Gandalf's quest, they spend a few weeks at Rivendell planning, going over old maps, talking to Elves that had been to Angmar long ago (including Glorfindel, whose recent forays in **Nightmares of Angmar** took him back to that realm), and speaking to a few Rangers who've been there more recently.

The general consensus is that things are getting worse in the North: the Shadow is slowly lengthening, Trolls are a growing menace, and are occasionally seen far from the Coldfells and the Ettenmoors.

Before the company sets out, Gandalf makes sure to find the time to illustrate to the heroes the runic marks he is seeking. The Grey Pilgrim arranges for a private meeting with Erestor, Rivendell's foremost expert on written languages, and one or two companions, those whose abilities distinguish them as the more scholarly types – heroes possessing at least three ranks in the **Lore** skill, or a relevant Trait.

The chosen characters are subjected by Erestor to an erudite examination of the many tongues of the Elves, Men and Orcs that were ever used to weave spells of sorcery. The skilful scribe of Imladris delves deep into the subject, showing the characters several examples of manuscripts taken from the collection of Elrond.

Then, Gandalf takes on the subject most pertinent to the quest at hand: the tongue of the Black Land. Erestor takes out a handful of withered scrolls, held by several waxen seals and passes them over to Gandalf. With a worried look creasing his brow, the Wizard carefully proceeds to break the seals, and to unfold before the companions a number of sheets of parchment, their surface thickly covered by covered by evil-looking runes arranged in spiralling patterns.

"In the Dark Years, Sauron devised a language for his servants to use." Gandalf explains. *"In his pride he envisioned a world united under his rule and populated by slaves knowing no speech than his own. But Sauron knew many defeats, and the Black Speech of Mordor failed to spread even among his servants. Today, no Orcs know how to speak it, save for their captains and foremost champions, and they do so use a debased form, appropriate to their curses and profanities.*

"Only the Nazgûl know the tongue of the Black Land in its ancient form, and only their Black Captain had the cunning to conceive and develop letters to write it.

"The writings you will look for are composed using the symbols that the Lord of the Nazgûl himself devised for the study and application of sorcery. These Morgul-runes are foul signs, created to carry the meaning of a detestable language and to preserve the power of ancient spells."

Gandalf makes sure that everyone has had a good look at the scrolls, then he hastily rolls them up again, setting them aside.

"What I am asking you is to bring back to Rivendell any scroll or book written using the runes of the Lord of Morgul, or to otherwise copy any such writing you encounter. Be careful, as such is the malevolence of these sorcerous runes that you might find yourself able to read them, even if you have never encountered such writ before. The Lord of the Ringwraiths used this ruse before to enthral many of his current servants...

"Let me repeat this: do not attempt to decipher the runes, nor do not linger to look at them for too long. And if you find yourself able to comprehend their meaning, by no means utter any of the words they represent! Spells of ancient sorcery are not things to be trifled with..."

- Part Two -
Return to Angmar

Summer has begun when the company sets out from Rivendell accompanied by Gandalf the Grey. They all ride the best of horses that the stables of Imladris had to offer: clever, swift and sure of foot. Their packs are filled with provisions and their spirits are high. Additionally, their horses are laden with full sets of winter equipment for each of the companions.

The Journey

The first leg of the journey takes the company west from Rivendell to the south-western end of the Trollshaws and the Last Bridge.

On the second leg of their trip, they head almost directly north across the Lone-lands of Eriador, veering a little west so as not to come too close to Mount Gram. The Rangers of the North have a small outpost there, hidden amidst the hills along the edge of Angmar's waste. There Gandalf will remain with the horses as the company sets out on foot north-east towards the supposed location of the valley of Nan Gorthrim.

From Rivendell to the Last Bridge

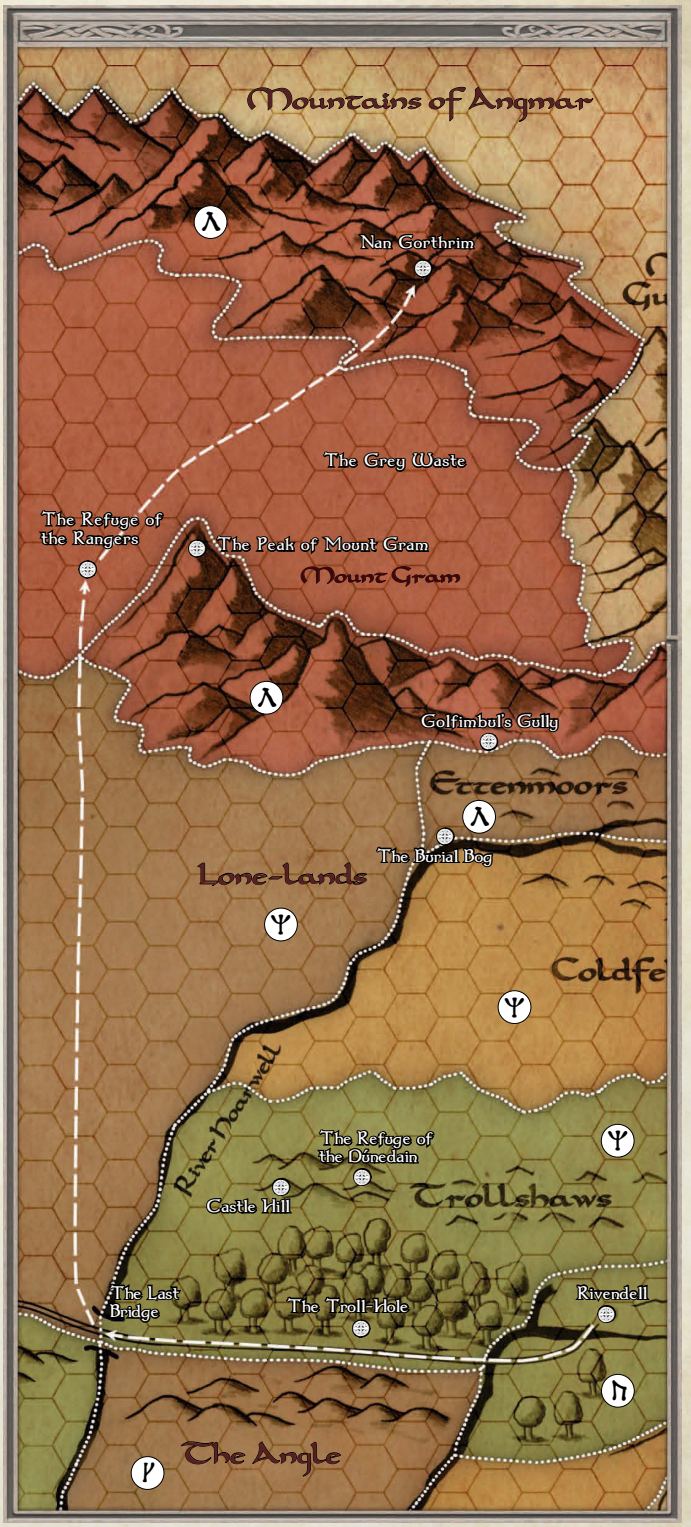
The company heads west along the East Road making good time. Brightly coloured butterflies flit across their path and it's hard to imagine that there are troubles elsewhere in the world. Gandalf is mostly lost in thought, though he eventually responds cheerfully if spoken to.

- 120 miles lie between Rivendell and the Last Bridge. Fair company and swift horses on a good road reduce this to a mere 2 days and a single Fatigue test.

Hazard Suggestions

Travelling with the Grey Pilgrim along a sunny road in the summer doesn't exactly conjure up thoughts of "danger" other than from an overly hot sun, but the Wild is the Wild...

Summer Storm (All Companions – Fatigue)
After passing under the forest eaves, the company can't see the rapidly changing weather patterns sweeping south from over the Trollshaws. A sudden squall catches them unaware as they gallop along the road. The company must make **Explore** rolls to quickly find shelter, or their next Fatigue test is increased in difficult by one level (TN +2) due to all of their gear being thoroughly soaked.



From the Last Bridge to the Hidden Refuge of the Rangers

The company passes north over green grasslands and wooded hills all but abandoned by man. These lands clearly once held many people, for ruins dot the landscape, but they are all covered in greenery now. The summer sun grows steadily colder and soon ceases to give any cheer as the characters continue over the grasslands to the wastes south of Angmar.

- This leg of the journey is 160 miles over pathless wilderness. Fortunately, Eriador is green in the summer and the rolling hills make for fast going. It takes 12 days to reach the secret refuge west of the long shadow of Mount Gram and two Fatigue tests at TN 16.

Gandalf leads the company to a hidden Dúnedain camp some 40 miles west of the foothills of Mount Gram. Distant enough, but still, perhaps too close for comfort.

Hazard Suggestions

The farther the company travels north, the more their gloom increases and the terrain, which started bright green, slowly fades to a dull grey and turns increasingly hostile.

Unfriendly Eyes (All Companions – Dangerous Meeting)
Gandalf brings his horse to an abrupt halt, his gaze set sharply to the east. He suddenly leaps off his horse, swiftly pulling it into the cover of a copse of trees, while telling the company in a low terse voice, *"Swiftly, into the trees. Hide!"* All the character must make either **Athletics** or **Stealth** rolls to swiftly conceal themselves. A dust cloud appears in the distance and sharp eyed characters can see a hunting party of Orcs from Mount Gram running over the hills.

Note any failures – the characters won't be attacked at this time, but the Orcs scent them on the wind... and recognise the smell on the waste on the next leg of the company's journey! (See the **Stalking Orcs** episode opposite).

The Refuge of the Rangers

The refuge is hidden in a small gully, beneath a natural optical illusion. It appears to be nothing more than a few boulders set amidst some sparse trees, but if approached at just the right angle and taking the right turn, a maze of stones (with several dead ends) leads down into a small natural cavern. The horses must enter one at a time, but there is more than enough room for them, plus the company and their gear. A small natural stream runs along part of the cavern, which Gandalf indicates is safe to drink from. No one else is currently there, but the place looks like it's occupied from time to time.

Gandalf kindles a warm fire and tells the companions tales of heroes long past, whose deeds have been forgotten by all but him. The voice of the Grey Pilgrim softly lulls them into a deep sleep. In the early morning the companions awake with a surprising zest, as if they slept on deep mattresses: they all reduce their Fatigue rating by 1 point, if they've gained any so far.

After breakfast, the Wizard passes over a rough map showing the location of Nan Gorthrim, handing to the scholarly heroes he selected for the task several rolls of newly scraped parchment and writing implements.

"We come to it at last. I shall await you here. If you have not returned after three weeks, I shall deem that you are not returning at all. Know that I would not ask this of any of you, if it was not of the greatest importance. Go quickly, quietly, and with my blessing."

From the Refuge of the Rangers to Nan Gorthrim

The final part of the company's journey is by far the most dangerous. The characters swiftly pass into the barren lands that mark the southern outer reaches of Angmar and eventually into the perilous region known as the Grey Waste, a desolate country filled with grey scrub and stunted, gnarled trees. It is swiftly obvious why it would have been dangerous to bring horses here: the broken ground conceals countless holes and pockmarks where a horse's leg would readily break. The sky is perpetually overcast and gloomy. It is hard to believe that it is summer in Eriador, for there is no trace of it here. (For more information about Angmar and the Grey Waste, see *Rivendell*, page 48.)

- Travelling on foot from the hidden camp of the Rangers to Nan Gorthrim is a daunting task, sure to put to the test the hardiest of adventurers. It's a 100-mile trek, heading north-east across the Grey Waste. It takes 25 days for the company to reach the Valley of the Dead. It requires 5 Fatigue tests at TN 18. They also have to make a single Corruption test, as the valley of Nan Gorthrim is considered Blighted (see *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, page 223).

After a few days of travel over their wastes, snow drifts appear and flurries occasionally assail the company. The cold gets steadily worse as the southernmost of Angmar's mountains grows continually higher on the horizon as they pass east.

Hazard Suggestions

The Grey Waste of Angmar is a Shadow Land and conceals many perils. See *Rivendell*, page 55 for further inspiration.

Blinding Glare (All Companions – Strain)
The company is traversing a plain of bone-white ashes, and the light of the summer sun reflects upon its surface even if the sky is overcast. All companions must make a **Travel** test to limit their exposition to the blinding luminescence. Failure indicates they lose a Success die's worth of Endurance.

Mourning Shade (Look-out Man – Misery)
A moaning spectre visits a Look-out man every night, to tell the tale of how he and his family died when Orcs fleeing the advance of the Men of the West put his village to the torch. The companion must pass a Fear test or be considered temporarily Miserable for the length go the journey.

Wolves (All Companions – Dangerous Meeting)
A pack of starving, ferocious wolves is wandering the waste, led astray from the mountains by an ash storm. The hungry beasts follow the heroes from a distance, but won't attack them openly. They look for stragglers instead, or consider attacking a Look-out Man at night. These wolves are Wild Wolves, as described on page 246 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*. Packs generally have 4 to 6 members.

Stalking Orcs (All Companions – Dangerous Meeting)
If the company experienced the Unfriendly Eyes hazard during the previous leg of the journey, they are now ambushed by the band of Orcs of Mount Gram that smelled them before. The Loremaster must set up a combat encounter based on the company's current circumstances (rules for the Orcs of Mount Gram can be found in *Rivendell*, page 73).

– Part Three –
The Valley of the Dead

Mithrandir's research was accurate; the frozen valley that the company enters upon leaving behind the Grey Waste of Angmar is indeed worthy of being called "Nan Gorthrim", for it is here that the Witch-king worked his foul sorceries of old. The Morgul-lord studied his dark matters behind the stone walls of a tower, and that tower miraculously escaped the destruction of Angmar and is still standing today. The Hill-men who used to live in the valley named the tower the "Icy Flame" for the eldritch energies that ignited the sky about the fastness and made it appear as if the snow itself was burning with blue-green flame.

Nan Gorthrim opens at the southernmost end of the Frozen Path, the hidden road that runs across the Mountains of

Angmar (see *Rivendell*, page 52). Fortunately, the company doesn't have to walk that cursed trail: rather, they pass through the foothills and up a winding track that eventually leads into the valley itself. It is a long and narrow dale, cut by many streams of dirty or even poisonous water, flowing down from the sides of the dark mountain range. The land is lifeless and empty, nothing seems to grow here, and no sound can be heard echoing against the sides of the valley as the company makes its progress.

Eventually, the companions arrive in sight of their destination: the stonework of the Tower of Icy Flame is barely visible through the ice and snow encrusted about the side of the mountain that it is carved from. It seems to have no discernible "door" or entrance that can be seen from a distance. Windows sealed with great iron shutters and rimmed with ice open about the very top of the tower. Gandalf's map roughly indicates the location of a tunnel entrance at its base that eventually leads to the tower itself, but there are no details of the interior.

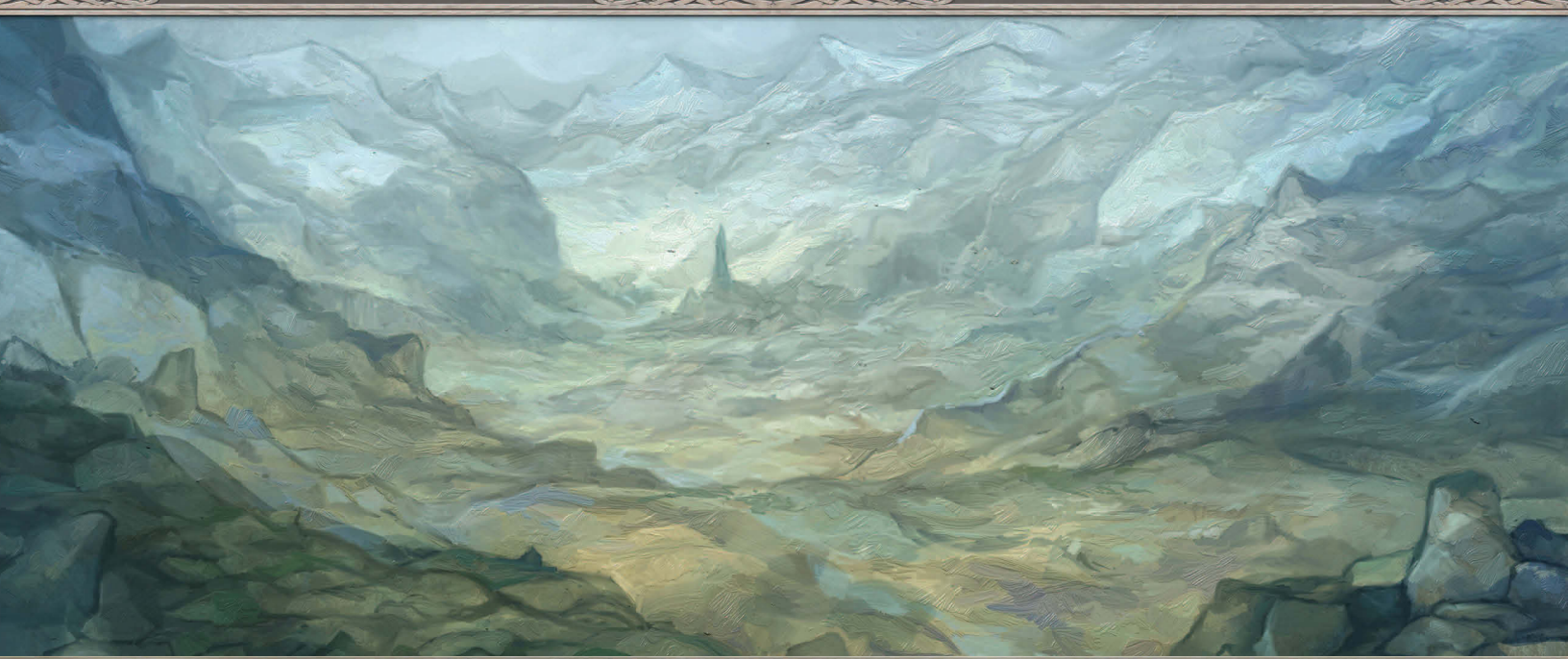
The Stairway

A successful **Explore** roll will bring the company to the right winding track: a treacherous staircase that winds steadily upwards along the mountainside. A failure indicates they have taken the wrong path: they still reach the staircase, but each member of the company gains 1 point of Fatigue as they spend many hours climbing a frozen rock face.

When they reach the staircase, they find that it is cut from a reddish stone, and that it emerges from the surrounding snow and ice because a rivulet of water runs along its steps like a diminutive waterfall. Wisps of vapour rise from the thin film of running water, twisting about the staircase. To climb the stairs, the companions need to pass an **Athletics** test. It is a hard climb, made worse by the wet, slippery steps (TN 16).

If a companion fails the **Athletics** test, he slips off the steps and falls! If this happens, the player-hero must the Feat die and consult the table below:

	The companion falls off the winding stairs and hits the frozen ground. suffering a Wound.
1-4	Several of the ancient steps shatter and fall away! The companion on them loses a number of Endurance points equal to double the Feat die result as they fall hard onto the next still-intact steps. Additionally, the Target Number of the climb for any companion behind them on the stairs is immediately increased by +2 as they must now navigate the huge gap.
5-10	The companion slams down hard on the icy stairs, losing a number of Endurance points equal to the Feat die result.
ᚠ	The companion slips, but finds a handhold before falling off the stairs.



At the top, the stairs reach a stone ledge that seems made out of a single, gigantic slab of dark red marble. Here, the companions find the source of the water that trickles down the stairway: it drops from high above right on the stone ledge, probably from the thawing of the ice crowning the top of the tower. Before the heroes, a wide entrance gapes like an open wound along the western face of the mountain, leading into a vast tunnel.

Under the Tower

The tunnel leads straight into the mountainside, until it reaches a 'T' junction. The left-hand path leads into a maze of rough-hewn stone passages, the other heads up towards the upper levels of the Tower of the Icy Flame proper (see **The Tower**, on page 123). The maze to the left is empty and dark, and most passages lead only to dead-ends; a thorough and wearisome search will locate a narrow corridor that gradually slopes downward, until it reaches a steep staircase leading to the underground dungeons beneath the tower. A draft of cold, rank air blows from below.

A Patch of Midnight

It is completely lightless inside the Tower of Icy Flame. Characters without light are at a severe disadvantage.

- The difficulty of any roll using a Perception, Movement or Survival skill is raised by one level (TN+2). Fighting companions are considered to be severely hindered when attacking and defending.

Fortunately, Gandalf thought this circumstance likely. Every member of the company carries two torches that Gandalf prepared himself. They burn brightly and long, but not forever:

- Whenever a player carrying a torch gets an Eye result in any roll, he must spend one point of Hope or the torch sputters out and cannot be relit.

The Goblins of the Tower of Icy Flame

The Tower of Icy Flame and the complex of underground passages that wind beneath it is the domain of a group of Goblins of Carn Dûm. These weak but canny creatures were abandoned by their slavers long ago and have led a quiet life ever since, never getting too far away from the protection of their underground lair. They fully intend to continue this way, and will consider with attention how to proceed against a group of well-armed intruders such as the companions.

The Goblins discover immediately that someone has entered their domain, but they know that strength is not on their side. They will then try to exploit their advantage of knowing the territory. They know every nook and cranny of the ancient structure, and will use every secret passage and spy hole to observe the companions from a distance, being careful not to give away their presence.

For the length of their stay, the companions will always feel like they are being watched, but they will be unable to identify the reason why. They might at times spot small movements at the corner of their eyes, or hear distant scuttling sounds, or the soft thump of furtive steps above them, but will unable to actually see the Goblin scouts that track their every movement.

The Goblins will continue to watch the heroes until they commit a mistake, like splitting the party or leave someone behind. When this finally happens, the Goblins will summon the Deadly One and ask him to solve their problem. The Deadly One is a very old monster, a Great Orc so ancient that he was among those who fought alongside the Lord of the Nazgûl himself when he was the king of the witch-realm of Angmar.

There are another 60 Goblins or so deep down in the bowels of the mountain. The company has a fair amount of time to finish their business and be gone before the Goblins take action, but if the companions linger too much the Loremaster will take action and set up a confrontation.

The Deadly One

The Deadly One is a Great Orc with only one eye on his misshapen face, a baleful red orb that is so eerily positioned that it looks like it is set in the middle of his forehead. He is a cruel and dangerous creature, and he doesn't like to be awakened from his slumber...

When the Loremaster considers it appropriate, he will ambush the companions, and attack with a small horde of Goblins to precede him. Considering how well they

know the tower, the Goblins will always choose the best place to set up their surprise attack, and will exploit any available advantage. The stats for the Deadly One are based on those of a Great Orc, reinforced by two new special abilities taken from the *Rivendell* guide (see the Powerful Adversaries chapter, page 67).

Attribute Level	
7	
Endurance	Hate
48	8
Parry	Armour
5+2 (shield)	4d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 2
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Heavy Scimitar (2h)	4
Broad-headed Spear	3
Special Abilities	
Deadly Elusiveness*	Great Size
Hideous Toughness	Horrible Strength
Commanding Voice	-

*The Great Orc can be engaged in close combat only by heroes fighting in Forward stance. The Deadly One maintains this special ability as long as he is fighting alongside a horde of Goblins (see their description below).

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Heavy Scimitar (2h)	7	9*	17	Break shield
Broad-headed Spear	5	10	12	Pierce

Heavy Scimitar : * The Deadly One's Heavy Axe is augmented by the Deadly* special ability (its Edge rating is lower than normal by 2 points).
Broad-headed Spear: The Deadly One always initiate combat by hurling his spear at a target wielding a long range weapon (if available).

Goblins Horde (Goblins of Carn Dûm)

Attribute Level	
2	
Endurance	Hate
10	2
Parry	Armour
3	2d
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Broad-bladed sword	2
Bow of Horn	1
Special Abilities	
Craven	Hate Sunlight
Hatred (Dúnedain)	Hatred (Elves)

Special: When the Deadly One attacks, he is preceded by a small horde of Goblins. There is apparently no end to their number: the Loremaster allocates 2 Goblins for every

companion, always leaving 4 Goblins to shoot the company using their bows. Whenever a Goblin dies, another takes its place the following round.

When the companions have slain at least 12 Goblins the reinforcements stop. Additionally, the Deadly One ceases to enjoy his *Deadly Elusiveness* special ability.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Broad-bladed sword	5	10	14	Poison
Bow of Horn	4	10	12	Poison

The Tower

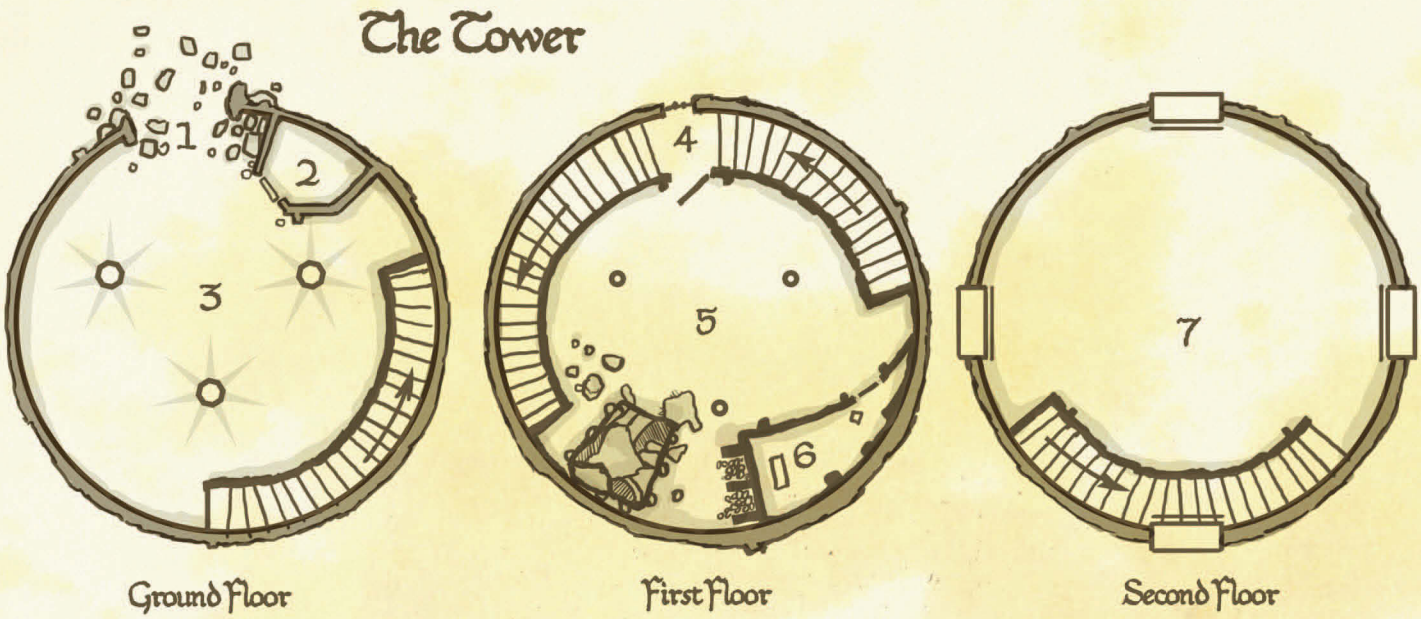
If the companions take the right-hand tunnel from the entrance, they find that it winds upward, soon turning from exceedingly crudely formed to skilled stone work.

Ground Floor

1. The Broken Entranceway: Once there was an imposing entranceway carved out of the rock here, designed to look like a leering face, with vast doors set within its jaws. No more. The doors are long since rotted away and the ends of the rock have been broken, as though something burst through them long ago. A Dwarven player-hero can immediately tell that the stonework is of Dwarven make. Something is slightly wrong with it, though. A successful **Riddle** test suggests the exact flaw: there is no joy in this work, it was doubtless carved by Dwarven slaves.

2. Guardroom: Beyond the entrance there is a room that once served as a guard post. It's door is still intact. Stone alcoves line the room, evidence of rusted weapons remain, but it has long since been picked clean by Goblins.

3. Main Hall: A huge circular hall, with a once-polished marble floor, now cracked and pitted with age. A few pieces of broken masonry lie about the room, but it is mostly clean. A massive staircase sweeps up along the wall disappearing to the upper floors where it touches the 40-foot high ceiling. A small cupboard of sorts is under the staircase, but it holds nothing of value. Three great lanterns of wrought black metal hang from the ceiling, suspended by heavy chains affixed to the walls at different points. A **Craft** test will readily figure out how to lower the lanterns, which hold candles that will still burn, lighting up the room with a sickly yellow light; however, the sounds of a lantern being lowered and raised will alert the Deadly One that someone is about.



First Floor

4. Landing: At the top of the stairs, there is a wide landing on the first floor of the tower. A shuttered and barred window is set in the wall. It is inoperable (the outside is covered with ice). A massive, broken doorway leads into a room beyond and the vast staircase continues up in a spiral along the tower wall.

5. The Lair of the Deadly One: Whatever purpose this room once served, it has since been turned into the lair of the Deadly One. A huge makeshift bed built using bones, pieces of shattered furniture, blocks of marble and a hundred different types of cloth, furs and skins occupies one corner. Here the Deadly One normally slumbers, but the bed is now empty, as the Great Orc has been warned of the company's arrival. In the centre of the room, set within an alcove where he can view it, is the hoard of the Deadly One: a wealth of icy gems, ill-gotten silver, and old armaments worth Treasure 100**, piled up here by the Goblins of the Tower who accumulated it in years of plundering and searching ruins. There is a stout door on the far side of the room, across from the alcove. Strangely, it is clearly untouched.

6. The Sorcerer's Study: Characters attempting to approach this door find their hearts racing faster and faster, with icy tendrils of dread running through them as they reach for the handle. Player-heroes must pass a Fear test (TN 18) to open this door. Failure means they cannot bring themselves to do it. The room beyond is a high-ceilinged chamber with no windows nor tables or chairs. Several hollows dug into the walls were clearly used as a bookshelf, as a number of those still have scrolls of parchment sticking out of them. An ornate lectern of wrought iron lies toppled on the floor. If the companions unroll them, they discover that a number of scrolls are written using the same runes that Gandalf showed them in Rivendell.

7. Conjuring Chamber: The top of the tower is a wide chamber with a smooth floor and featureless walls of dark red marble. Four mullioned glass windows are set at each of the four cardinal directions. They are tall and narrow, and currently sealed with heavy iron shutters. The atmosphere here feels particularly oppressive and suffocating, the darkness hard to dispel by torchlight. The cold that permeates every other part of the tower is replaced here by a sinister warmth that emanates from the walls themselves and explains the thawing of the ice trapping the top of the structure. A character who proposes a **Search** roll and succeeds discovers that there are four levers concealed at the base of each window; operating each lever opens the corresponding iron shutter. If the companions open one or more windows during the day, the light washes over the chamber walls in shades of many colours, revealing an intricate web of finely etched runes covering every smooth surface in the room. The signs correspond to the symbols that Gandalf is searching for.

Copying the Black Speech

To accomplish what the Grey Wizard asked them to do, the companions must bring back documents written using the Morgul-runes they have been shown in Rivendell. As described above, several scrolls in the Sorcerer's Study display such writing, and these are easily taken and added to the company's carried gear.

The runes etched on the walls of the Conjuring Chamber are a different matter: if they want to bring proof of this find back to Rivendell, the companions must take out their writing implements and patiently copy the markings on the parchment provided by Gandalf, a pen in one hand and a candle in another.

- After every two hours of patient copying each character is allowed to make a **Lore** roll.

The Loremaster should take note of the number of successes obtained by any companion writing down the runes, as this total will later influence the research of Gandalf the Grey (see page 137). A great success equates to two successful rolls, and an extraordinary success to three successful rolls.

But copying sorcerous spells is a dangerous endeavour; to their dismay, the heroes discover that the more they look at the spiralling script the more they seem to comprehend the meaning of the various symbols... for every **Lore** roll, the copying companions must pass a Corruption test. If the roll is failed the companion gains 1 point of Shadow and cannot continue to copy (he cannot make any further **Lore** rolls).

The Witch-king Sees

The first time that a player-hero rolls an Eye on any roll while in the Conjuring Chamber, something uncanny happens: the companion is first heard muttering under his breath, and before anyone can intervene, he unwittingly utters a few words in what sounds like a harsh, menacing tongue: the Black Speech of Mordor!

When this happens, a cold draft of air snuffs out all the candles at the same time, and the chamber grows dark. Then, thin lines of fire appear on the chamber walls. They soon race across the room, symbols and runes appearing as the fire traces over the stone. The room flares with eldritch light and the companions see clearly how the symbols that Gandalf was searching for cover every surface of the room: floor, walls and ceiling. There must be hundreds, maybe thousands of lines of Morgul-runes. With a final blinding flash, the darkness returns, weighing upon the heroes with a new sense of oppression, as if a malevolent will was bent upon them, gazing into their souls.

- All companions are now considered to be temporarily Weary. Each companion will remain Weary as long as he is inside the tower, or until he rolls a Gandalf rune on a following die roll.

If that was not enough, the commotion caused by the sorcerous conflagration probably offers the best occasion for the Goblins of the Tower to take their chance and attack the company in the Conjuring Chamber...

Getting Out Alive

After they've gotten what they came for, the company still has to get out. If they dawdled too long in the Icy Flame and they haven't been attacked yet they run the risk of being ambushed by the Deadly One as they are trying to leave.

If this is the case, the Great Orc will ambush the companions as they enter the Main Hall. A swift-thinking character can try to drop one or more of the hall's lanterns onto the Deadly One. It takes a **Craft** test to disengage the mechanism at just the right moment to hit the Great Orc with the falling lantern. On a success, the monster suffers a loss of Endurance equal to the roll of three Success dice. If the **Craft** test is a great success add two Success dice, four on an extraordinary success. Once the Great Orc gets hit, he won't fall for this trick again.

The stairs leading down the valley of Nan Gorthrim are far easier to navigate on the way back down than up and the company can automatically traverse them.

Return to Rivendell

Presuming all went relatively smoothly, Gandalf meets with the company as they leave the Grey Waste. The night they spend in the refuge of the Rangers is the first comfortable rest the company has had in weeks. When the player-heroes show Gandalf what they found in the Tower of Icy Flame, he studies briefly every sample of writing by the firelight, muttering to himself with interest as he skims every parchment over. He then quickly lays everything aside, saying, *"Best if I look at this far from here."*

In Imladris

It is still high summer in Eriador when the company sets out the following morning and the heroes make excellent time, returning to Rivendell some two months after they set out. Once there, Gandalf confers with Master Elrond and Erestor for several days, always in the company of one or more of the scholarly companions he prepared for the quest.

One morning, Gandalf, Elrond and Erestor invite the company to meet them in the eastern porch to share their early conclusions.

Master Elrond states: *"Alas, it as is we have long suspected: the fears of the Dúnedain are not unfounded, the Witch-king is responsible for the darkness that plagues Tyrn Gorthad."*

When he speaks at first, Gandalf practically spits the words in his anger. *"Dark and terrible is the will of the Lord of the Nazgûl, exceeded in cruelty only by that of his Master. The Shadow over the Barrow-downs is not the work of a single curse. The Witch-king summoned hundreds, perhaps thousands of evil wights, dark and accursed, to haunt the hollow places beneath the green hills. It was the work of centuries of malice."*

The Grey Pilgrim sighs deeply and calms down. *"Yet there is a glimmer of hope – we do not think all went as he intended. From what we could glean from his writings,*

in the barrows the Morgul-lord encountered a power he wasn't expecting to face, a force whose nature and purpose he didn't understand, for it is older than he."

Erestor adds: *"There is still much to learn yet from the scrolls you brought back from the cold and dreary lands of Angmar, and much we don't yet understand. We thank you for the service you have done to the House of Elrond, and we encourage you to continue. If you will keep searching for answers on your own, you might well provide us with the key that will unlock the many riddles wrought by the evil cunning of the Lord of the Nazgûl."*

"Erestor is right. There is much yet to unravel here," concludes Gandalf, *"but other pressing errands call and I must be off. If you were to look for me in these halls at the onset of winter, you may very well find me."* With a smile and a wink, he departs.

On the following day, Mithrandir heads out from Rivendell.

How to Continue

Depending on how the Loremaster wishes to structure **Shadows over Tyrn Gorthad** another adventure could easily be inserted here, as it is still only mid-summer. The Trolls of the Ettenmoors have certainly been acting up of late, as have other less-than-savoury sorts and Master Elrond may wish the characters to look into various troubles that have come to his attention.

Otherwise, it would be appropriate to conclude the Adventuring phase here, and initiate a Fellowship phase for the end of the year.

Despite the dark times, the winter is bright in Rivendell. Characters choosing to spend their Fellowship phase in the Last Homely House may select any of the options listed on page 21 of *Rivendell*, and have a new option available to them – to confer with Gandalf himself! Good as his word, Mithrandir does indeed return to Imladris for the winter (see nearby box).

Researching the Barrow-downs in Imladris

Heroes spending the Fellowship phase in Rivendell may choose the *Researching Lore in the House of Elrond* undertaking to further investigate the mysteries of the Barrow-downs (see *Rivendell*, page 22).

Should the undertaking yield one or more 'useful elements of information', the Loremaster may use *The History of Tyrn Gorthad* box on page 112 to fill his players in, along with one or more stories from the three tales detailed below.

Secrets in Stone: Records kept in Imladris indicate that the Dúnedain of Cardolan buried many of their honoured dead in Tyrn Gorthad over the years. Following the tradition of that kingdom, the names and heroic deeds of those who were interred there were traditionally inscribed onto the stones placed atop their barrows. Some stories tell of Dúnedain who encountered Wights that emerged from barrows of individuals they knew in life – when hailed using the names of their departed friends, the Barrow-wights would look confused, as if struggling with themselves and occasionally let people flee, unharmed.

- Studying the stones of the Barrow-downs might provide some useful answers. (See **Part Four – On the Downs**).

The Story of Egalmir: Egalmir was a descendant of the chroniclers of the royal house of Cardolan. He lived in Arthedain at the time of the last war against Angmar. During his long life he continued the tradition of his family and preserved a wealth of lore, including a great deal of information about the evil spirits that came to infest the Barrow-downs. When the Witch-king seized Fornost in

New Fellowship Phase Undertaking: Confer with Gandalf

When companions spend a Fellowship phase in a location where Gandalf can be met, they may go and swap stories with the Wandering Wizard. A companion who has spent a Fellowship phase talking with Mithrandir may gain his next Lore or Travel level (player's choice) at half the cost in Advancement points. Alternatively, they learn less, but have more fun and pick up one of Gandalf's bad habits, acquiring the Smoking Trait.

1974 of the Third Age, Egalmir sealed his family's records in a hidden vault.

- Egalmir died before he could return to Fornost and his notes on where the vault was located, along with hints at the means required to open it, found their way to Rivendell (see **Part Five – The Hidden Vault at Fornost**).

A Númenórean Tale: A tale of the Second Age, hearkening back to the time when the House of Elrond was founded, tells of a Númenórean captain who passed through Tyrn Gorthad returning home from the battle fought at Sarn Ford where Sauron himself was routed. Traversing the hills the captain stumbled upon a place where a fierce battle had recently taken place. The bodies of many Orcs and other fell creatures were strewn across the hills, amidst the remains of a number of Elven warriors. The greatest number of dead enemies were arranged in a wide circle about the remains of a single Elf-lord, clad in a blood-soaked, once-golden cloak and wielding a bright blade (see also **Part Six – Mirabella's Song**).

"Mighty he must have been, even among the Eldar, though we knew not his name. I have never seen the like of his blade, silver run through with a black metal we could not identify. It had a curious name, engraved in the script of Eregion: 'Dambeth Medui' – 'Last Answer'. We thought his people dead, it was long before we learned that some had survived, passing north. We buried him with honour in one of the eastern hills, his blade with him. A curious thing, one of my men told me that mallos flowers eventually grew on that hill, though otherwise, they have only been seen growing far to the south."

The *mallos* is a small, lovely wildflower, its name means "gold-snow" in Sindarin. None of the lore-masters of Rivendell can recall any blade named "Dambeth Medui" – but the last years of Eregion were dark ones and much knowledge was lost.

Wherever the Road Leads Us

The next three parts of **Shadows over Tyrn Gorthad** (Parts Four, Five and Six) are all optional – if the players never research the events behind the recent activities of the Barrow-wights and ignore rumours that come their way, they might never get to play them. Or, they might play through only one or two or them, based on what they deem to be worthy of their investigations.

If the Loremaster is using the default pacing for this adventure, it is now the year 2976. The company may set off on exploits having little to do with **Shadows over Tyrn Gorthad**. If they do participate in a different adventure, one of the following parts could still be undertaken in late summer or early autumn. If the player-heroes do concentrate on investigating the Barrow-downs, they can complete two parts in one year.

Gandalf encourages the company to learn whatever they can, especially if anything interesting was turned up during research over the winter. He has errands "away to the East" and will not be back in Eriador till the following year.

– Part Four – On the Downs

The green hills of the Barrow-downs hold no cheer. Wet and dreary, even in summer, they stretch out into the distance in a long line of monolith-crowned hills and oddly shaped tors. Fog fills the reaches between hills in the morning, shifting upwards to reform on the hilltops as the sun burns it off in the vales, before spilling back below to cover all again at twilight. Those who have visited the Barrow-downs before find them even more oppressive than they remember, as if the world is holding its breath, waiting...

To Find You Must Seek

A company seeking more information about what is going on with Tyrn Gorthad has a difficult task, in the main, because they don't entirely know what they are looking for. Finally, the Barrow-downs are a blighted place, and their dark atmosphere threatens to mar the spirit of the most hardiest of adventurers: all companions must pass a Corruption test each day, or gain 1 point of Shadow (this presumes that the characters are regularly leaving the Barrow-downs at night to avoid camping directly on the Downs, which is probably an unattractive idea, to say the least).

- Searching companions may choose to roll **Explore** or **Search**; each hero is allowed to make two rolls for

every day of searching. A great success equates to two successful rolls, and an extraordinary success to three successful rolls.

- For every six successful rolls accumulated by the company, the Loremaster reveals one clue from those listed below as the result of their search (the items are revealed in the order they are presented).

- Each time the company learns something, the difficulty of any subsequent roll goes up by one level, thus it is TN 14 to learn the first useful piece of information, TN 16 to learn the second and TN 18 to learn the third. The more the company learns, the more the Barrow-downs seem to actively hinder them, fog shrouds what they seek in odd ways, and they easily lose track of which stones they've already inspected if they aren't very careful...

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules found within *Rivendell*, rolling an while investigating the Barrow-downs increases the Eye Awareness by 3 points instead of 1. Needless to say, all revelation episodes during this part of the adventure will result in the Barrow-wights taking action against the trespassing adventurers.

Companions researching Tyrn Gorthad directly among the barrows can unearth the following pieces of information:

- **Shrouded Names:** If the companions inspect those barrows that were erected at the time of the kingdom of Cardolan, they discover that the names of those interred beneath them have been deliberated defaced from the stones on top of the hills. They frequently look as if they were clawed away.

- **Ancient Truths:** The oldest tombs of the Barrow-downs are said by the Wise to date all the way back to the First Age. The majority of these ancient burial mounds lie undisturbed. In fact, it looks like very few of them have ever been opened. The symbols on their monoliths are defaced only by time and weather. However, several of the tombs have been ruined; not opened, *ruined*, as if the earth and stones of the barrow had been deliberately dug out and scattered.

- **Lines of Power:** Unlike the barrows of later eras, the First Age tombs do not lie across the Barrow-downs randomly. Their placement seems deliberate, part of a vast symbol that stretches for many miles. All of the damaged tombs lie along the outer boundaries of this pattern. Whatever the massive "rune" might once have been, the ruined tombs clearly disrupted the pattern in several points.

See page 137 for how all this information helps Gandalf and the company.

Watchful Eyes

After the company has discovered the first piece of lore, they are approached by Mad Ostley, an old treasure-hunter whose lust for gold often brings him in the Barrow-downs (see also *Rivendell*, page 62). The crazed-looking wanderer is interested in what the adventurers are doing, and if they manage to impress him, he will give them advice that gives them each a free Attribute bonus on their next **Explore** or **Search** roll in the Barrow-downs.

Accidentally, it was Mad Ostley who brought the lost Mirabella Thorndike home (with the help of the Rangers, see page 132) and he knows where the ancient barrow covered in small golden flowers is to be found. Mad Ostley will study the company for a while before approaching them. Characters who are honest with him about their intentions will find him a ready ally, if a little unhinged. He says that tombs he knows were sealed in the past have now been re-opened; far too many in fact. The fog has also been troublesome of late, carrying strange sounds, and moving in unnatural ways even more so than it had in past years.

- Part Five -
The Hidden Vault at Fornost

At the southernmost tip of the North Downs, the ancient road known as the Greenway ends in the ruins of Fornost Erain, Norbury of the Kings. It is now all but lost to nature, its fallen stone towers covered in greenery, its former grandeur forgotten. Whatever the forces of the Witch-

king of Angmar did not break in its siege long ago, time has since reclaimed. The majority of the folk of Eriador think of the ruins as a haunted place where no sane man ventures. The Bree-landers call it "Deadman's Dike" and shudder at the thought of willingly going to such a place.

If the companions have studied the story of Egalmir and have unearthed his notes, they will certainly travel to Fornost Erain to find his vault. Egalmir's notes are fairly clear, but the passage of time has destroyed many landmarks that would have helped finding the right place.

Been There...

The story of Fornost Erain is detailed in the *Rivendell* supplement. If the companions played through the events of *Concerning Archers* (see page 61) they have visited its ruins already. They might also have encountered Talandil, the Ranger of the North Downs (see *Rivendell*, page 59). If the Loremaster wants to involve the old Dúnadan with the company, he may follow the suggestions given at page 66 (the *Where is Talandil, the Ranger of the North Downs?* box).

Searching for the Vault

Companions looking for the vault using the notes left by Egalmir roll **Explore** or **Lore**; each hero is allowed to make two rolls for every day of searching in Fornost (all searching companions must also pass a Corruption test each day, or gain 1 point of Shadow). A great success equates to two successful rolls, and an extraordinary success to three successful rolls. It takes a total of five successful rolls for the companions to pick their way through the greenery to find the right location.

When they finally succeed, the companions navigate their way down to a plant-filled cellar. Its ceiling collapsed a long time ago, but the entrance to the vault of Egalmir seems undisturbed. It takes a **Riddle** or **Craft** roll to discern how to undo the latch that allows it to open. Once triggered, the door of the vault slowly swings open to reveal... nothing! Sort of. In fact, the empty chamber is filled with rubble, as a roughly dug tunnel opens on its floor. Someone has clearly tunnelled into the vault from below and removed any content it might have still been there. A character with the *Tunnelling* Trait automatically notes that the passage can't be more than a few months old; any other character will need to make a **Craft** roll to recognise this.

Rogues Beneath the Ruins

The majority of Dwarves are hard-working sorts, gruff, but honest. There are some Dwarves though, that never quite fit in... and then there are Dwarves like Lófar. Lófar Light-finger is considered to be disreputable scum by the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains. He was banished many years ago for his larcenous tendencies. When his sobriquet was laid on him it was meant to be an insult, but he embraced it with pride. In Lófar's mind, a life spent digging deep into the earth for uncertain profit was a total waste of his days; but digging with a real chance of treasure though, now that is a worthwhile endeavour.

Lófar turned his skills as a miner to tomb-robbing, though he's clever enough not to have plied his trade on the Barrow-downs. The ruins of Fornost Erain seemed a perfect location...

Gathering a small band of like-minded Dwarves, Lófar slipped into the ruins of Fornost and went to work. Swiftly discovering that if they tried to excavate from above the Rangers would surely catch them, Lófar and his thieving band moved their operations underground. They have been tunnelling for two years now and business has been terrific! Or so Lófar would claim if asked. In truth, while they have recovered many treasures, Lófar and all of his Dwarves are slowly becoming more than a little unhinged, due to the creeping Dragon-sickness that their ill-gotten gold has awakened in them...

In Deep Places

It takes a **Hunting** test to follow the trail left by Lófar and his Dwarves. They weren't bothering to conceal their trail, thinking no one would ever come looking. The tunnel is cramped and it's pitch black, meaning the characters will have to figure out some sort of illumination or suffer the penalties described on page 121. It only takes fifteen minutes or so to get to the centre of Lófar's operations. The Dwarves found a submerged chamber that was once likely a meeting hall of some kind and dug outwards from there in multiple directions. All characters should make an **Awareness** test (TN 18) in order to identify the sounds of mining in the distance. It's so difficult because the Dwarves work carefully to avoid detection from above. Lófar has half a dozen Dwarves working for him. At any given time, three are sitting about drinking while the others are working.

Thieving Dwarves:

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
18	3
Parry	Armour
4	3d
Skills	
Personality, 0	Survival, 1
Movement, 2	Custom, 0
Perception, 2	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Mattock	2

Lófar Light-finger:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
22	5
Parry	Armour
6/9 (+3 underground)	3d
Skills	
Personality, 3	Survival, 1
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Mattock	4
Special Abilities	
Commanding Voice	-

The company can attempt to ambush the Dwarves if they wish, or negotiate. Lófar's reaction to the arrival of the company depends on how they approach him. If they just attack, he fights for long enough to take their measure and if it looks like the battle is turning against him, flees, abandoning his fellows without compunction. If the company's approach is to talk, Lófar first studies, then goes one of two ways: he either tries to persuade them to take a

share and move on, or he claims to have the permission of the Rangers to be working here. He lies *very* well. It takes an **Insight** roll (TN 20) to determine that he is lying.

Whatever the company says, it doesn't matter truly – Lófar is so gone into Shadow that he assumes everyone lies just as much as he does. The second the characters let their guard down, he and his Dwarves attack without warning. A company that claims they've come for book records and nothing else will give him pause though.

A **Persuade** test (TN 18) will convince Lófar that maybe the company does consist of weird scholars, in which case he'll admit that he does have some interesting books (including Egalmir's records) stored nearby... so what are they worth to the company?

Lófar and his Dwarves have amassed enough assorted grave-goods to have a hoard equal to Treasure 50*. Egalmir's records contain much of value, including diagrams of the layout of the tombs of the Barrow-downs and even sketches of the interiors of several barrows along with notes on who was buried where. See page 137 for how this helps Gandalf and the company. However the company ends up handling the situation, the Dúnedain will also be very interested to hear about Lófar and his operation.

– Part Six – Mirabella's Song

Rumours have spread through Eriador that in autumn of the previous year (2975 by default) a Hobbit girl from Bree was caught on the Barrow-downs after her uncle's caravan had some sort of terrible mishap. Lost in the heavy fog, she ended up deep in the Barrow-downs where she eventually took refuge on a hillock to sleep for the night. A Barrow-wight came for her, but apparently never approached her closely, calling her from a distance, and so she lived to see the morning. The story was the talk of the town in the village of Bree for a time. The company will have heard this rumor in the spring (possibly earlier, if they visited or stayed in Bree last year) and may wish to follow up by heading to Bree to talk to the Hobbit girl, to hear what actually happened without all the inevitable embellishments that such stories acquire.

How About Bree?

Every player of *The One Ring* can easily picture the village of Bree... but no information has been provided so far for the game. In the meantime, the information found in *The Lord of the Rings* and the summary below will suffice...

Bree is a big village that sits on the west side of Bree Hill in central Eriador, part of a group of settlements with three other communities, Staddle, Combe and Archet. Bree is the home of an old famous inn, the Prancing Pony, and rests at the crossroads of two ancient roads, the Greenway and the great East Road. As used as they are to foreigners, Bree-landers tolerate outsiders so long as they don't make any trouble, but they aren't passing fond of them: *"Asking after things what aren't none of their business, as is."*

Bree and the other three villages are unique in that they are communities of both Hobbits and Men living together. While outsiders might say "Bree-hobbit" or "Bree-man" to differentiate them from a Shire Hobbit or a Man from elsewhere, they refer to themselves as the "Big Folk" and the "Little Folk".

Looking for Mirabella

The Hobbit girl in question is one Mirabella Thorndike, a brave lass who got very lucky indeed for she took refuge on the Hill of the Elf Prince which still has great power to hold evil at bay (see overleaf). To find her, the companions will have to ask about for where her family might be. A **Persuade** or **Courtesy** roll will do, though using **Song** in the inn may prove fruitful too.

The Thorndikes are pedlars who sell some Shire goods to Breelanders along with simple crafts made in the four villages. Presuming the company finds them, it isn't just Mirabella they have to win over, it's her uncle, Moro too. While they have both had quite enough of adventures, Mirabella and Moro both found they're kind of fun to recount after the fact.

Moro is a stout Hobbit of late middling age. He hooks his thumbs behind his braces when he talks, occasionally rocking back and forth on his big feet. Getting to hear Mirabella's story (see overleaf) means persuading her uncle. This takes a **Persuade** roll (TN 18), lowered by one level if a Hobbit or Dúnadan is asking. While Breelanders

normally look down upon the Rangers, Mirabella was ultimately rescued and brought home by Mad Ostley and a group of Rangers so her family now looks on them with more favour.

When Moro asks why the companions want to hear the tale as plenty already know it, honestly answering that the heroes want to stop the Barrow-wights will automatically convince both him and Mirabella that the characters are, *"Heroes, like from the old tales."*

Mirabella is just 10, a slender young Hobbit girl with bright, inquisitive hazel eyes and dark hair.

Mirabella's Story

"We were coming back from getting supplies in Buckland, on the border of the Shire. We were trying to hurry along the East Road, and we hadn't cleared the Downs proper. It was getting dark, and no one likes to be on that part of the road after sundown.

"At some point, the fog starts spilling over that wall that runs alongside the road to the south... it's an old wall, but it's tall. Uncle Moro said it was nothing, but he looked very upset. Thistle, that's our pony, Thistle was awful upset, whinnying and carrying on so.

"The later it was, the thicker the fog got. We heard sounds in the distance, like someone crying, and then metal clanging. Thistle took such a fright he bolted and we hit a runnel. Off came a wheel. Uncle could barely calm poor Thistle, we thought he'd hurt himself straining so. Uncle tried to calm him, took off his bridle and someone came out of the fog. I saw burning eyes, like fires, but so cold. I saw a pale sword, heard Uncle yell 'Run, girl!' and Thistle screaming.

"I ran, fast as I could. I kept hearing sounds and I was so frightened. So worried about Uncle and Thistle. The fog was thick, so thick I could barely see. I hit a stone while running and I couldn't figure out which way the road was. I looked up and saw the sky and stars. The fog cleared a little and I saw the hill, it didn't look like the others. I made my way there, quick as I could. It was covered with little golden flowers, they smelled real sweet. I climbed up the hill, leaned against one of the stones and I think I fell asleep.

"A while later, I heard a voice and saw one of the Big Folk, down in the fog. He called me, said he'd take me someplace safe, but when I asked him to come up, he wouldn't. He kept looking at the hill and then me, insisting that I come down to him. When I asked him why, he snarled at me and his eyes burned right through the fog. I knew he was a Barrow-wight, then. I closed my eyes and sang an old song, so I couldn't hear him any more. Eventually, he went away.

"In the morning, the sun came. A man with white, wild hair found me. He was a little scary, too, but not at all like that Barrow-wight. He asked who I was, and he said he had some friends who could get me back to Uncle. We walked for a while among the hills until he found his friends. Uncle said they were Rangers."

Mirabella can recall little else of her ordeal; she cannot remember exactly what song she sang, but she is absolutely certain that the stars were burning brightly above her, comforting her as she kept her eyes upon them while the Barrow-wight roamed about the base of the hill without touching it.

The Hill of the Elf Prince

The barrow that Mirabella took shelter on is a tall hill covered with small golden flowers called mallos, which typically grow far to the south. In all the Barrow-downs, they only grow on this singular hill. Companions that read

the Númenórean Tale of the Elf Prince from page 127 will instantly recognise this as the same hill from that story.

Any character who searched the Barrow-downs (**On the Downs**, on page 127) may very well have seen the hill already. An **Explore** test will recall its exact location, not far from the East Road along the north-eastern side of the Barrow-downs. Mad Ostley also knows where it lies.

For millennia a blade and a suit of armour were buried beneath the ground here that had great power against the Shadow. The blade was removed many centuries ago, the armour long since eroded, but its enchantment has slowly passed into the very earth itself. The hill now acts as a ward against Barrow-wights and other unclean spirits. Unless forced on by a greater will, they will not approach it and to stand upon it causes them great anguish.

– Part Seven – Oldest & Fatherless

In late spring or early summer of the year 2977, Gandalf the Grey seeks out the company in Rivendell, as he has returned to Eriador with grave news for the great task that lies ahead. But before Mithrandir meets them, word may already reach the company that some Barrow-wights have been spotted in daylight away from the Downs. This is completely unprecedented and Master Elrond is openly troubled by the implications.

Alternatively, depending on what the company has been up to, the Loremaster may wish to inform them that Barrow-wights have been seen during the day by setting up a combat encounter featuring one, just after lunch, after an triggers a Hazard episode, for example.

The Counsel of the Grey Pilgrim

Mithrandir greets the company cheerfully, though his face looks grim. *"Well met, indeed!"* He inquires after all they've learned, asking sharp questions about everything. He will be especially pleased to receive Egalmir's records noting that he'll have to study them at length. Eventually, he will tell the company (or they will perhaps tell him) that Barrow-wights have been seen in the daylight. He nods.

"Truly, it is as I feared. We must act soon. I've had many concerns that have kept me occupied, but this matter has never gone far from my mind. While I was east of the mountains, I spoke with a very old friend about this problem and she gave me much to think on. I had to return to Rivendell, there are some ancient texts here I must read again to refresh my memory, which is not what it once was, and some materials I must gather for our task, if you will help me once more."

The company are Free Folk and can answer as they will – though they'll likely want to know what he wants them to do.

"For centuries, a powerful and ancient magic has prevented the Barrow-wights from straying far from their hollows under the earth. But what force once restrained them is failing, its efficacy disrupted. Whether this is happening by design or due to the wear of time I could not say. But what I do know is that the wards of Tyrn Gorthad must be reinforced, and that to do this I will need your help. It will be very dangerous. We must reset the boundaries..."

Gandalf falls silent, as if stunned, allowing the company to think a new thought has crossed his mind. *"Of course. Boundaries. Of course! There is someone else I would have you seek out, if you will. His house lies on the western edge of the Barrow-downs, on the edge of the Old Forest."*

Gandalf tells the company that they should seek the house of Tom Bombadil, which lies near the headwaters of the Withywindle, a stream that flows from the Downs and almost neatly splits the Old Forest in twain. Characters that succeed at a **Lore** test (TN 18) have heard the name "Bombadil" before. He is thought of by the Dúnedain as a guardian of the Old Forest, bigger than a Hobbit, smaller than a Man. Gandalf declares that after they've talked to Tom Bombadil, he'll meet them at the Prancing Pony, in the village of Bree, and they'll discuss exactly what must be done next.

Finding Bombadil

It's over 400 miles from Rivendell to the House of Bombadil; depending on where the characters start out from, the journey could take a while. Hazard episodes don't necessarily have to involve Barrow-wights, but the

characters should soon realise it's a near cheerless summer this year. The weather is frequently overcast throughout Eriador, summer storms continually lash the road, making it less safe than usual and gloom is omnipresent.

The weather about Tyrn Gorthad is, if possible, worse than the rest of Eriador. The clouds are near black with rain and ominous to behold. The company may well decide that, while it will take longer, going around the Barrow-downs and then heading south along the border of the Old Forest is the safest way to find the House of Tom Bombadil.

The Old Forest is widely famed as a strange land, the final remains of a wood that once stretched from the sea all the way to the Gap of Rohan in the distant south and beyond. Queer creatures are said to roam inside and rumour has it that the trees within it frequently move of their own accord.

Fortunately, the company doesn't have to enter the woods; however, they should all make **Awareness** tests. On a success, they realise that all of the animals they see along the edge of the woods, whether birds or beasts, watch them as they pass in eerie silence.

As they are wandering, the player-heroes see several bright rays of sunshine slip through the clouds to touch down in the distance and a clear voice comes to them, ringing along the trees:

Ho Tom! Swift Tom! Tom Bombadil!
Dancer over fields and glens, singer to the hills.
Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow.
Tom saw you coming from afar, no need to bellow!

Encountering Tom Bombadil

The companions don't know quite what to expect as Gandalf didn't give them a lot of details, mainly because no amount of warnings could quite prepare anybody for Tom Bombadil. As the companions approach where they heard the voice from, a short man with a bushy brown beard and happy blue eyes bounds out of the woods before them. He does indeed, have a bright blue jacket and yellow boots, along with a rumpled hat, crowned by a long feather.

Set Tolerance

The basic Tolerance for this encounter is based on the highest Wisdom rating among the company, modified by +2, for Tom already knows of the company's quest and approves, after his fashion. Standing rating in any culture means very little indeed to Tom.

Evaluating the Outcome of the Encounter

The successes gained by the company over the course of their time with Tom Bombadil will determine exactly how much help he decides to give them on their quest. Once they exceed the Tolerance, Tom won't boot them out, but he'll have made up his mind on what he will do for them.

Introduction

The companions can introduce themselves to Tom using either **Courtesy** or **Song**. They quickly find, no doubt to their surprise, that he already knows something about each of them. He knows all about any Hobbit from the Shire, including details about their families. He also knows a fair amount about the company's larger exploits throughout Eriador. If they try to explain themselves, or why they've come, Tom stops them, waggling a finger while casting his eyes eastward.

He'll smoothly take the arm of any Ranger, especially those who typically hang back because they are used to disturbing "civilised" folk and says with a grin, as he drags them along:

Wandering fast, far, and free,
between the mountains and the sea.
Bright sword in shadows swinging!
Ancient oaths in heart still ringing!
Lay down your burdens for one night.
Sing with us in the candles' light!

Interaction

Tom swiftly brings the company to his home nearby, which rests at the top of a grassy knoll overlooking the Barrow-downs from the edge of the Old Forest. His home is solid, built of stone and the inside is filled with brightly shining lamps along with a wide variety of merrily burning candles. Tom sings out as they approach:

Hail lady of cheerful rains!
Star of my days who never wanes!
Fairer than the sun on water!
Queen of my heart, the River-daughter!

A beautiful maid, more like to an Elven lady than a mortal woman, welcomes the characters into their home. Her long bright gold hair is loose about her shoulders and she wears a silvery-green dress that almost looks like brightly coloured fish scales, twinkling in the many lights of the house. Water lilies float in earthen jars filled with water and set about the room. Tom introduces her as *"My pretty lady, Goldberry"*.

Tom and Goldberry rush about in a merry, coordinated dance seeing to their guests needs (putting horses in a small stable Tom keeps if the company has them), putting drinks into their hands, removing their cloaks and so on. Goldberry speaks in a melodious voice and seems gracious and kind.

At some point, someone will ask the obvious – *"Do you know why we've come?"* or something along those lines. Bombadil turns very solemn for a moment and responds:

"Aye, Tom knows why you've come."
Bold wights, mouldy wights, slipping out their hills.
Running here, striking there, travelling where they will.
Malice that will not rest, nor accept their ever after.
Cursed souls walking in the night, cold fingers choking laughter.

He shakes his head sadly, but his mirth swiftly returns. *"Time enough for such things. Eat! Drink!"* Tom excuses himself to return with a crown of leaves in place of his hat.

Hey dol! Merry dol! Caper or be stillo!
Sheath your swords! Choose your chords! Now it's time to trillo!
Sing along, ring along, with Tom Bombadillo!

Tom laughs. *"You want my help, noble heroes? First you sing with us!"* Tom expects all company members to join in with him and Goldberry in a **Song** test. If someone tries to beg off due to lack of skill at singing, Tom laughs and says:

Come Orcs, come Trolls, never a quaver!
But ask for a jolly tune and your friend needs a saviour!

All characters find they enjoy a free Attribute bonus to their **Song** rolls – even the most tone-deaf find that they can sing merrily in the House of Tom Bombadil. All of their successes directly add to their final success during their interactions with Tom.

After many hours of singing, drinking and good cheer, Tom and Goldberry insist that their guests spend the night. The company finds that beds have already been laid for them, ones appropriate to their sizes. In the morning, after serving the company a big breakfast, Goldberry disappears and Tom sits with the characters to talk.

Tom speaks of the Barrow-downs as they are, Tyrn Gorthad as it was, and the hills as they were before the first of the Edain chose to bury their dead within them. His voice murmurs on, telling them great truths of the earth and old secrets that the characters can never after directly recall, but something of the wonder and the majesty of Bombadil's words remains with them after.

Bombadil speaks of the Barrow-wights, their epic greed, and terrible loneliness. Finally, Tom tells the company that what they are to attempt is a noble endeavour, for many have been hurt and many more will be if the Wights are not confined to the Downs once more. He gives direct answer to few questions. He laughs if asked who he is. *"Why, I'm Tom Bombadil of course! All that you see of me, I am! Eldest, that's what."*

He concludes: *"Tell Gandalf that he has tarried long enough. Mid-summer is when he must act, farthest from the winter in which they were bound. Tell him the Wight-king will come before the end."* Characters that make a **Lore** test (TN 18) know the Wight-king as a terrible legendary figure, the greatest among the Wights of the Barrow-downs.

Parting Blessings

When it is time for the company to depart, compare the number of successful rolls they achieved against the following entries:

0-1: Tom regrets that such grim souls had to be called in to handle such a sad task, but some things cannot be helped. All companions regain 1 point of Hope.

2-4: Tom's words and songs linger deeply within the company, comforting them against darkness. All companions regain 1 point of Hope, and on the night of the renewal of the wards the company is immune to the Barrow-wights' *Dreadfuls Spells*, as the songs of Bombadil echo in their mind and drive away the weariness.

5-7+: Not only do Tom's songs linger, but so does the outrage at what the Barrow-wights have done and may yet do. As 2-4, but the company is also immune to the Wights' *Strike Fear* special ability.

Tom walks the characters to the edge of the Barrow-downs and waves them goodbye with a final song:

Heed no shadows, my hearties.
Be bold, but be wary!
Old Tom's songs are about you now,
But no more time to tarry!

- Part Eight -
Casting Out The Shadow

Gandalf the Grey meets the company at Bree as promised so they can discuss what must be done and exactly what he thinks will happen. To renew the wards of Tyrn Gorthad the Wizard will have to concentrate over the ancient magic for many, many hours. In fact, Gandalf isn't entirely certain how long it will take him to succeed – there is too much he does not know about the old spells he is about to cast.

Gandalf will start at noon on Mid-Summer's Day, following Tom Bombadil's advice. He is certain that it will take to midnight at least to finish, if not far later into the night. He is equally certain that the Barrow-wights will attack in earnest when they realise what he is up to...

Gandalf declares that there will be little he can do to help the company once he starts. On the contrary, he will rely on the companions for his own safety: they will need to protect him as best they can, and they will be on their own until he finishes.

Finding the Right Spot

Gandalf isn't entirely certain where he should begin. Clearly atop a tall hill, perhaps in the middle of the Downs? The characters can say as they will, but if they've discovered it, the absolute best answer is the Hill of the Elf Prince. The effects of the hill are listed throughout the section detailing the hours of the fateful day and night that the magic is being performed.

If the company doesn't know about the golden-flower covered hill, they'll likely want a high topped hill that is easily defended. A successful **Explore** test will show several likely candidates for this and allow the characters to make their **Battle** tests with a modifier of +2 before they

engage the Barrow-wights as they will have picked their chosen ground well. The **Explore** roll is automatically successful if they know about the Hill of the Elf Prince.

Many Preparations

To help the companions in their difficult task, Gandalf has procured a cart-load of gear. For the occasion, the Grey Wizard has spent several sleepless nights applying his skills in the creation of fireworks and assorted explosives to ignite some blazing fires to chase away the darkness (perhaps with the aid of Larry Appledore, if no ill befell him in **The Company of the Covered Wain** - see page 85)

"To ward off the night and to help you against Wights as well!"

Using Gandalf's preparations, the companions may be able to set up multiple bright bonfires, fuelled by special powders that will have them blazing all through the day and night. The bonfires might be placed about whatever hill the magic is to be performed on, and atop the surrounding ones too.

- If the Loremaster deems that the companions exploited the ruse efficiently, the Wights won't be able to profit from their *Denizen of the Dark* special ability.

Gandalf also gives each member of the company a gleaming glass vial, closed by a cork stopper. Inside is a yellowish waxen liquid. *"When things look darkest for you, hurl these against the ground, but mind you don't look!"*

- Gandalf's vials burn with a bright incandescent light when shattered. Barrow-wights engaged in combat with a character who breaks a vial are set on fire and are considered to be Weary for a Success die's worth of combat rounds. Multiple vials do not stack effects, other than the longest time rolled prevailing.

Mithrandir's Magic

Gandalf the Grey knows many spells, but this time he will be tackling a power he does not know fully. The company's help over the last two years proves itself now.

To reseal the mystic boundaries that prevent the Barrow-wights to leave Tyrn Gorthad, Gandalf will start weaving his magic on Mid-summer's Day.

- In game terms, the Loremaster will make a number of rolls using the Feat die and 5 Success dice.

The first roll is made at four o' clock, followed by three more rolls, one every four hours (at eight o'clock, midnight, and at four in the morning).

- Gandalf must last out the night, or accumulate 7 successes, whichever comes first, to succeed and send the Barrow-wights back to their hollows.

A great success counts as 2 successful rolls and an extraordinary success counts as 3 successful rolls. On an result, the difficulty of all subsequent rolls is increased by one level (TN +2).

The base difficulty for the rolls depends on the previous deeds of the companions:

- If the company didn't journey to Angmar at all and left Gandalf to his own devices, the difficulty is equal to TN 28.
- If the company only brought back the scrolls found in the **Sorcerer's Study**, the difficulty is equal to TN 24.
- If the company copied the Morgul-runes in the **Conjuring Chamber** of the Tower of Icy Flame the difficulty is equal to TN 24, minus the number of successes rolled by the copying companions (to a minimum of TN 14).

Other modifiers can change the base difficulty:

- Reduce the TN by -1 if the company told Gandalf about the **Shrouded Names** they found.
- Reduce the TN by -1 if the company told Gandalf about the **Ancient Truths** they learned.
- Reduce the TN by -1 if the company told Gandalf about the **Lines of Power** they discovered.
- Reduce the TN by -2 If the company recovered **Egalmir's Records** and gave them to Gandalf.

Protecting Gandalf

Gandalf needs to concentrate on his magic, and for the purposes of combat counts as if he is in a Rearward stance. If attacked, Gandalf cannot Parry, but is considered to

have a Protection value of 4d. If Gandalf suffers a loss of more than 20 Endurance points during any four-hour block, he doesn't get to roll the dice at the end of it.

The following paragraphs detail the various events occurring on Midsummer's Day. The Loremaster will have to adjust the various descriptions to the current circumstances of his own playing group.

Noon till Four

Gandalf and the company are assembled, all is in readiness. The sky is overcast, with patches of blue glimpsing through occasionally, but it grows progressively worse as the day wears on. As it gets later in the day, the fog begins to swirl about the base of the company's chosen hill in odd patterns.

Gandalf stands at the top of the hill, in the middle and begins to speak a chant of words that roll out of him in a measured tone, occasionally waving his staff toward the various cardinal directions as a punctuation. The characters can understand little of what he does, though they may occasionally recognise words of Sindarin or Quenya, the language of the Noldor Elves.

Gandalf accomplishes the first part of his magic undertaking.

Four till Eight

As the sun begins to set but it is still light out, the swirling fog comes to a sudden halt and voices start whispering out of the growing darkness. The first probing wave of Barrow-wights emerges from the fog to assault the company. There are a number of Barrow-wights equal to the number of companions, minus 1.

Based on the companions' preparations, the Barrow-wights might or might not benefit from their *Denizen of the Dark* ability. The Barrow-wights will try to use either *Strike Fear* or *Dreadful Spells: Wight Song* before they attack with their cold blades.

If the company stand on the Hill of the Elf Prince, the Wights stop at the base of the hill and will come no closer. They do try to use their *Dreadful Spells* on each one of the characters from a distance. Even if it is successful, they will not approach, but they'll note which companions seem more susceptible to their voices.

At no point do any of the Barrow-wights attempt to interfere with Gandalf at this time, though some time during the fight one of them will look as though it is going to approach the Grey Pilgrim, but then it clearly thinks better of it and turns elsewhere.

Eight till Midnight

One of the most terrible powers behind the Barrow-downs has become aware of what the companions are doing and moves directly to stop Gandalf. The fog returns with a vengeance, racing over the Downs, and making what's coming difficult to see. Sounds echo strangely off the stones of the hills, further distorting movement. The company's bonfires roar to life about their chosen hill.

A wave of Wights equal to the number in the company (including Gandalf) stalk out of the fog. If Gandalf has already accumulated 5 or more successes, they are accompanied by the dread Wight-king (see *Rivendell* page 80 for more about the Wight-king). The terrible undead king will move directly to try to cut down the Grey Wizard. If the Wight-king loses more than 40 points of Endurance, he withdraws, for the moment.

Wights forced to move onto the Hill of the Elf Prince by the fierce will of the Wight-king automatically become Weary (that includes the Wight-king himself). A Barrow-wight (not the Wight-king) that is already Weary (for example due to one of Gandalf's silver vials) loses a Success dice worth of Hate points instead.

Midnight till Dawn

The fog partially rolls away and the company can see Barrow-wights coming from every direction, their eyes like dull stars approaching over the Downs. The light from the bonfires seems pale and barely stretches beyond the hill.

The Wight-king returns, or if he has not yet attacked, he does so for the first time now. He leads a seemingly endless spectral horde of Wights. They have come to kill. Two come for every player-hero and the Wight-king himself comes for Gandalf. Every time a Barrow-wight is struck down, it is replaced by another within three rounds. Gandalf's voice raises to a thunderous roar. As his left hand holds his staff high, light blazing from it, his right hand waves and all the bonfires burst into brilliant life. All characters regain 2 points of Hope as they feel their hearts surge within them. Amidst his singing Gandalf gestures at the Wight-king.

To end the onslaught, the company must either end the Wight-king or collectively destroy a number of Barrow-wights equal to the following: 7 minus the number of successes Gandalf has achieved so far, times the number of heroes in the company.

For example, in Gandalf's first three tests, he has accumulated 5 successes. There are 5 company members. 7 – 5 = 2 and 2 x 5 = 10 Barrow-wights that must be slain.

If the Wight-king falls and there are Wights standing on the Hill of the Elf Prince, they explode in blazing balls of greenish light. Everywhere else, the Barrow-wights swiftly retreat into the fog.

If the company manages to kill enough Barrow-wights to rout them without destroying the Wight-king, he retreats with measured steps, his terrible eyes never leaving those of the company. His voice hisses through the early morning air: *"We will meet again."*

The companions know they've made a deathless enemy, who will *not* forget his defeat at their hands... Either way, dawn comes as the Barrow-wights slip away into the fog.

The Wight-king:

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
74	12
Parry	Armour
7 +1 (Buckler)	2d
Skills	
Personality, 5	Survival, 2
Movement, 4	Custom, 4
Perception, 3	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Ancient Sword	3
Chilling Touch	3
Special Abilities	
Black Dread	Denizen of the Dark
Hate Sunlight	Dreadful Spells*
Darker than the Darkness	Thing of Terror

The Wight-king Song:* The Wight-king sings a song composed of sad but horrible sounds, with a voice that seems far away and dreary, as if it was rising from the ground. A hero who fails a Corruption check (TN 20) due to *Dreadful Spells* first finds himself separated from the rest of the company, and then falls into a deep slumber and is considered unconscious. Sleeping companions are dragged into the Wight-king's barrow to be sacrificed; if found, they may be roused with a successful **Healing roll.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Chilling touch*	Att. Level		18	Pierce
Ancient sword**	6	10	14	Disarm

* The cold, bony hands of the Wight-king grasp at exposed flesh – often the neck or face – and send an unnatural chill up that leaves their foe frozen to the very centre of their being.

** These ancient, pitted blades are still sharp and dangerous, their blows often stinging with an unnatural cold.

Barrow-wight:

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	**Hate**
54	6
Parry	**Armour**
4	2d
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 1
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Ancient Sword	3
Chilling Touch	1
Special Abilities	
Hate Sunlight	Dreadful Spells*
Denizen of the Dark	Strike Fear

Wight Song:* Barrow-wights chant a low, chilling song to subdue their foes with the dark enchantment of their voice. A hero who fails a Corruption check (TN 16) due to *Dreadful Spells* first finds himself separated from the rest of the company, and then falls into a deep slumber and is considered unconscious. Sleeping companions are dragged into the Wight's barrow to be sacrificed; if found in time, they may be roused with a successful **Healing roll.

Weapons:

Weapon type	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Chilling touch*	Att. Level		18	Pierce
Ancient sword**	6	10	14	Disarm

* The cold, bony hands of the Barrow-wights grasp at exposed flesh – often the neck or face – and send an unnatural chill up that leaves their foe frozen to the very centre of their being.

** These ancient, pitted blades are still sharp and dangerous, their blows often stinging with an unnatural cold.

Success!

Gandalf has reinstated the magical wards! A blue-white luminescence surges up from the hill and ripples far into the distance along the edge of the Barrow-downs. Any Wights immediately flee, if the Wight-king is present, he snarls and curses, before swiftly retreating. The weather improves tremendously over the space of an hour. In the morning, the sun shines through the breaking clouds and rainbows dance about the hills.

Barrow-wights can no longer pass beyond the boundaries of Tyrn Gorthad, though alas, they do remain dangerous throughout the Barrow-downs.

Renewed but Flawed

Dawn comes and Gandalf finishes his magic, but he knows that the boundaries are unsound. If Gandalf doesn't achieve 7 successes by his fourth and final roll, the Barrow-downs are contained, but there are 'cracks' in the mystic wall. The Loremaster should take note that the Wight-king can leave the Barrow-downs when he chooses and may be able to occasionally force a breach, allowing a small group of Barrow-wights to pass beyond the Downs to work his will...

Failure & Death

The company is struck down to the last and Gandalf cannot complete his magic before he is assailed and forced to retreat from the Barrow-downs. A Loremaster willing to abandon Tolkien canon should plan for an assault on Bree and, not long after that, the Shire...

Otherwise, Gandalf retreats to Rivendell and calls a council of the Dúnedain to explain what happened. The company are mourned and remembered in song. Their deaths certainly count as heroic and Gandalf makes a point of looking into the doings of their chosen heirs. The Rangers spend much of the rest of 2977 fending off attacks by Barrow-wights. In summer of 2978, Gandalf returns with a small troop of Dúnedain volunteers to Tyrn Gorthad to finish what he started. He succeeds, but the ranks of the Rangers are diminished by that many more brave souls... unless the player-heroes' heirs help out, that is.

Epilogue

If any of the characters fell during the night, Gandalf mourns their passing with the rest of the company, but otherwise he is pleased with how things went.

"They did not die in vain."

The weather throughout Eriador improves tremendously and the year 2977 ends up being remembered as a fair one, all things considered. The threat of the Barrow-wights has finally been contained and while it may not be entirely resolved, they are no longer a large-scale problem for Eriador.

Gandalf gives each surviving member of the company a pouch. The pouches contain small, but exceedingly well-wrought gemstones from Erebor of old. The contents of each pouch are worth 30 Treasure, but they incur only 1 Encumbrance.

Mithrandir is returning to Rivendell to rest for a time before moving on to other concerns, and the company is most welcome to accompany him if they wish. Over the following year, the company's renown is widespread among the Rangers and the Wise.

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